AN 5

ENQUIRY

WHENCE COMETH WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING TO MAN?

In which it is attempted to ſhew, among various other Points,

I. That Religion entered the World by Revelation.

II. That without the Aid of Revelation, Man had not been a rational, or a religious Creature.

III. That nothing can oblige the Conſcience, but the revealed Word of GOD.

IV. That a State, Religion or Law of Nature, never exiſted but in the human Imagination.

Being the Subſtance of two SERMONS, preached ſome years ago before a learned Audience.

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THE

PREFACE.

IT has ever been accounted laudable to attempt opening new paths to knowledge; and if that which follows, be hitherto almoſt untrodden, we may hope, the better it is known, the more it will be frequented: there is, at leaſt, no obſtacle in the way, to prevent a candid enquirer after truth, from entering into, and making a trial of it. Its only objects are, the honour of God, the dignity of man, and the juſt excellence of reaſon. Nor is any thing offered, for the promotion of theſe great ends, but what reſts on the authority of ſcripture, the frame of human nature, the capacity of our rational faculties, and the experience of all ages: to them is the appeal made, without diſguiſe, art, or ſophiſtry.

And if ſimplicity be a recommendation, it has a juſt claim thereto; being throughout, ſtraight, regular, and conſiſtent. There are no turnings to the right hand, or to the left; no doubts, entanglements, or metaphyſical deluſions, to contend with: all is plain nature, ſo that a wayfaring man, of the loweſt, if honeſt apprehenſions amongſt us, cannot err therein.

Another advantage is, that it ſtands not in need of making, at ſome times thoſe bold advances, at others as haſty retreats; which perpetually involve learned men, in contradictions, or incoherencies, who endeavour to incorporate natural religion with that which is revealed.

We all know with what reluctance the mind is brought to give up principles it was early taught to receive as true. But if human knowledge be ſtill capable of improvement, whatever is candidly offered to ſuch purpoſe, deſerves an examination, before it be rejected. With this view the following ſheets are ſubmitted to the learned world; not

out of love to novelty, but from a long and ſerious conviction, that no other hypotheſis can give that true obligation to religion, without which it is of little worth; therefore merits not cenſure, tho' it miſſes approbation.

If what is ſaid on Language ſeems, at firſt, remote; it is, becauſe no ſubject, that deſerves ſo much attention, has received ſo little: or it has been my misfortune not to meet with any author, who thoroughly conſidered the origin or extent of it. Had Mr. Locke *indeed taken them into his original plan, the neceſſity of which he afterwards ſaw, but too late; ideas of ſenſation and reflexion would certainly have been reſtrained within cloſer limits, than they now are: and an eſſay ſo framed under his maſterly hand, been one of the moſt finiſhed pieces among human productions.*

Mr. Locke *however is not infallible: and if any diſſent from him, on this, or other account, they have a right to ſay, as he did, in his* Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity. *"The makers of ſyſtems, and their followers, may invent, and uſe what diſtinctions they "pleaſe, and call things by what names they think fit. "But I cannot allow to them, or to any man, an au- "thority to make a religion for me, or to alter that "which God hath revealed."*

The other heads, for eaſe and method ſake thrown into ſections, would bear a much fuller explanation, than the brevity of a diſcourſe allows (being indeed abſtracts from larger works, intended for a continuation to the firſt volume on divine knowledge, but will now, probably, never ſee the light) yet may ſerve as hints, for minds of greater abilities to improve, and raiſe a fairer ſuperſtructure on: moſt of them being ſupported by names of allowed eminence, tho' no friends to the cauſe before us; and all judged capable of a ſtrict and proper demonſtration.

ROM. x. 17.

So then, Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

AFTER the knowledge of God, the moſt excellent and valuable to man, is that of himſelf. And as reaſon gives him the pre-eminence above other ſublunary creatures, it muſt be an enquiry of great importance, for directing the mind in its ſearch after truth, WHENCE COMETH WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING TO MAN? For with the royal preacher, it was "a point of wiſdom to know whoſe gift ſhe is." Wiſd. viii. 21.

To this the ſcriptures give a plain ſolution (1ſt.) in general, "it is God that teacheth man knowledge, and the inſpiration of the Almighty giveth him underſtanding," which *Job* alſo teaches in the ſame words. (2dly.) with regard to divine and ſpiritual matters, they particularly inform us, that "faith," or an aſſent of the underſtanding, grounded ſolely on the atteſtation of God, "is the evidence," the only aſſurance and proof, "of things not ſeen," or of whatever does not fall under the cogniſance of the ſenſes. Pſ. xciv. 10. c. xxxii. 8. Heb. xi. 1.

This ſhews, whence the impoſſibility, noted in the context, ariſes, of mens any way acknowledging the true God, *Jehovah* (for ſuch is the original word in the prophet *Joel*) without a ſuperior
Joel ii. 32. aſſiſtance. " For how ſhall they believe in him,
" of whom they have not heard; and how ſhall
" they hear without a preacher?" or one to inſtruct them in ſuch knowledge. For the Gentiles were
Rom. xi. 24. " of the olive tree, which is wild by Nature," and without freſh grafting and cultivation, could
v. 30. not produce fruit; on which account, " in times
" paſt they had not believed God." Becauſe they had not heard of him. " If ſo," then ſays the apoſtle, the inference from theſe premiſes is, " that
" faith cometh by hearing," or inſtruction thro' the vehicle of language, " and hearing," the canal of ſuch knowledge ſupplied, " by the word of
" God."

It ſeems then inconteſtably plain from the inſpired writings, that men neither did, nor could, know the true God, but from external information: and that the only knowledge of inviſibilities, as to their exiſtence or nature, is from Revelation. And if
1 Cor. iii. 11. this foundation be of God, it ſtandeth ſure; " for
" other can no man lay."

But how then comes it to paſs, that Revelation, if the ſole conveyor of divine knowledge, has ſo long hung down its head; and reaſon been placed among chriſtians, in the chair of infallibility, as the inventor, arbiter, and judge of things, both human and divine? This, among other cauſes, may have been greatly owing to the ſtrange prepoſſeſſion,

long

long handed down, which the world had conceived, in favour of *common notions*, *innate ideas*, and the like; as if the mind could in them, as in a mirror, behold the reflexion of all truths.

Mr. *Locke* indeed totally overthrew theſe unphiloſophical and abſurd non-entities. But as natural religion was then, and ſtill is, with the MANY, the catholick one; few treatiſes on that ſubject appear, without having conſtant recourſe to, "inward ſig-"natures, congenite impreſſions, inbred opinions, "notions grafted in, and written upon the heart, "interwoven with our very nature, ſpringing up "from the natural fæcundity of the mind, &c. "&c." for no viſibly good reaſon, but that ſuch a religion cannot be ſupported but by ſuch proofs; tho' they neither can, nor ought to be relied on, ſince as our excellent *Pearſon* obſerves, "we are "aſſured, God never chargeth us with the know-"ledge of him upon that account." in Art. 1.

It is however the voice of the pulpit and the ſchools. That man has faculties ſufficient to furniſh him with all neceſſary truths. That he not only could, but did, diſcover all the Duties he owes, to God, his neighbour, or himſelf, before any revelation was made to the world. That God never gave a law to mankind before the days of *Moſes*. That a general declaration of his will was never made to the world before the preaching of the goſpel. That natural religion muſt be pre-ſuppoſed, as the foundation of that which is reveal'd; and that it could not ſubſiſt without it. With many other poſitions of the like kind.

Were reaſon indeed able to do all this, revelation would certainly be uſeleſs, as they would have it: nor would it be eaſy to juſtify the wiſdom of God in giving one; ſince it could anſwer no end, which man was not well qualified to attain without it. But a FEW, on the contrary, are of opinion, that reaſon is no way debaſed, by ſaying, that man ſtood in need of a ſuperior light to diſcover all the intellectual truths, neceſſary to his perfection, in this world, and the other: and that theſe were communicated to him by immediate inſtruction from God himſelf.

To confirm this hypotheſis, is the intent of the following diſcourſe; or to prove that religion enter'd the world by revelation. Which being a ſubject of the moſt intereſting nature, as an enquiry into the truth, and obligation, of that religion we profeſs; if the arguments brought in ſupport of it, do not convince, they ſhould not offend. And to anſwer both views, ſhall reſt the whole on theſe Principles.

That the ſcriptures, as received by us, are the word of God.

That the word of God is infallibly true.

" That the veracity of God, is as capable of
" making us know a propoſition to be true, as
" any other way of proof can be; and, there-
" fore, we do not, in ſuch a caſe, barely be-
" lieve, but know, ſuch a propoſition to be
" true, and attain certainty." *Locke*'s 2d reply to bp. of *Worc.* p. 498. *Dublin* edit.

§. 1ſt. The firſt thing to be conſider'd, as the foundation of our enquiry, is the nature of REVELATION. Which, in its primary meaning, is only to make ſomething known that before was ſecret. Now, the poſſibility of this cannot be queſtion'd of *God*, who has infinite methods of diſcovering himſelf: nor of *man*'s being capable of receiving it, becauſe he that made the ſoul, can operate upon it, in any manner ſuitable to its faculties. And as to *matter*; could God communicate nothing, in whole, or in part, but what man already knew, or could comprehend the extent of, his knowledge muſt be finite as man's, or man's infinite as God's.

And as the Almighty worketh nothing in vain, thoſe perſons, to whom he revealed himſelf, did by virtue of ſuch revelation, perceive, know, and aſſure themſelves, that he who ſpake to them was God: ſo that at the ſame time they clearly underſtood, both what was delivered, and by whom. See *Pearſon*, Art. 1.

As to the frequency of ſuch revelations, the ſcriptures aſſure us, " that God, at ſundry times, and " in diverſe manners, ſpake in time paſt, to the " fathers." Before the flood, to *Adam*, *Abel*, *Enoch*, *Noah*, &c. After it, to *Abraham*, *Jacob*, *Moſes*, and all the prophets, who ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt. Heb. i. 1.

Particularly, God converſed with *Adam*, immediately after his creation. The firſt words of the ſerpent to *Eve*, prove her knowledge of him. As it is alſo evident of *Cain*, when he contended with, and went out from the preſence of the Lord.

Now,

Now, if God had no end in creating man, but to know and ſerve his maker, it ſeems as conſiſtent with the divine goodneſs, to inſtruct him in all things neceſſary to thoſe great purpoſes, as to make him ſuch a creature as he did: nor can ſuch a conſtant intercourſe be accounted for in any other manner, ſo becoming of God, or perfective of man. And had he been intended for a ſelf-taught, ſelf-ſufficient creature, the whole tranſaction of God with him, muſt have been entirely uſeleſs, or fruſtrated the very end of ſending him into the world; neither of which can be admitted. But *Adam* had wants both in body and mind; and if God planted a garden for food and delight, we cannot conceive him leſs mindful of the intellectual part, created after his own image.

§. 2d. It appears that God had frequent converſe with man, therefore, to advance him in the higheſt wiſdom, the knowledge and ſervice of his maker, or the whole of what is called RELIGION; conſequently it muſt, at this time, and in this manner, have enter'd the world. Or, if we define it, to be doing whatever we are obliged to by God, it will include both faith and practice; a right knowledge of his nature and promiſes, and a ſervice agreeable to his will. If then right apprehenſions of the divine attributes be, confeſſedly, the ground of all religion, they muſt have been well known, before there could be any ſuch thing, or man have ſpeculated about it.

We are, again, aſſured on all hands, that "man "by nature is under an impoſſibility of knowing the

"will

" will of God," (*Pearſon* creed, art. 8. p. 327.) " and " unavoidably ignorant of it," (Dr. *Clarke*, *Boyle* lect. pt. 2d.) as what none could declare but God himſelf. Therefore muſt have made a revelation of it, before man could be under any obligation to obſerve it, or capable of giving a ſervice well pleaſing to him.

If then, the firſt men, as ſcripture aſſures us, " walked with God, before him, pleaſed, and were " accepted of him;" we muſt believe they had a revelation of the divine will: becauſe without a rule, there can be no demand of obedience; no ſubjection to pleaſure, or diſpleaſure; rewards or puniſhments.

The firſt, and moſt eminent part of worſhip, was ſacrifice, inſtituted from the beginning, appointed for the expiation of ſin, and for ever ceaſed when the great oblation was offer'd. What then ſhould prevent our looking upon it as a federal rite of the new covenant, and coeval with it, as that was with the ſin of man? for there could be no acceptance without remiſſion, no remiſſion without blood, no faith without promiſes, nor promiſes without a covenant. Therefore, if God regards not will-worſhip, *Abel*'s faith, in that act, muſt have been, a firm truſt of receiving pardon, and an eternal inheritance thro' the promiſed Meſſiah, whereby he " obtained witneſs that he was righteous." Heb. xi. 4.

So awful and irreſiſtible is the force of truth, as to have induced many learned aſſertors of natural religion, from conſidering the firſt ſtate of man, to acknowledge the neceſſity of a revelation being then given. Becauſe the counſels, and free determinations

tions of God concerning man; his preſent duty, or future exiſtence, are ſecrets, which all fleſh is excluded from. Without it, he could not poſſibly have known the will, or intentions of his maker towards him: whence his original, whither his end, what was required, or upon what terms, God would proceed with him in juſtice, or in mercy.

Therefore confeſs, "that religion muſt have entered the world by revelation." (*Butler* Analogy.) For, "what only could make the firſt men ſo enlightened, as ſcripture repreſents them, was revelation; and, that allowed, diſpute is at an end." (*Warburton* Divine Legat.) And another, "If God had not vouchſafed to teach mankind, what they ought to *know*, and *do*, both before and ſince the fall, we muſt have been in perfect ignorance of God, and all religion, from the beginning of the world, till now."

§. 3d. But thirdly, as the apoſtle twice mentions this conveyance of knowledge, by HEARING; it certainly includes more then is commonly imagin'd, and coming from ſuch authority merits a due conſideration, in what manner it is applicable to, or conſiſtent with the human frame. In which enquiry, there is no flying from the will, to the power of God: we are not to examine, what he can do, but what he has done; not what he might have made man, but what he did. And if we judge from ſcripture, experience, and ſelf-conſciouſneſs; his trueſt definition will perhaps be found, to be an animal capable of ſpeech; and, thro' that medium, of reaſon, and religion.

For

For there is a wide difference between a capacity of acting, and the act itſelf. A watch, or other machine, fitted up with admirable ſkill, and perfect in all its parts, cannot put itſelf in motion; neither can the mind: yet one is a real watch without meaſuring of time; the other has a real capacity for thinking, but without thought. Both remain potentially ſo, till put into actual motion, by ſome external agency.

Thus, the intellectual faculties have a power to work, when ſupplied with materials to work upon, and not before; the mind is then carried into action, its ſecret ſprings exert their proper activity, and the rational frame enabled to think, and reaſon.

If we conſider the nature of ſpeech, ſomething ſo ſupernaturally divine appears to all who have duly weigh'd it, Heathens, Jews, Chriſtians, orthodox, and Atheiſts *, that they pronounce it to ſurpaſs the invention of men. Learned *Whitby* was ſo far convinc'd of language being the immediate gift of God, as to think it a clear demonſtration, that the original of mankind was as *Moſes* deliver'd it; from the impoſſibility of giving any other tolerable account of the origin of language. Attributes, V. 2. Serm. 2. p. 28.

And indeed every article in thoſe ſhort memorials of the firſt paſſages after the creation, imply an inſtruction by this means; it being inconceivable that man ſhould underſtand the words of God, before he was taught them. Whence it is generally allowed by all writers, " that tho' *Adam* had a ca-

* Even *Hobbes* could ſay, God taught *Adam* this uſeful invention. *Leviathan*. c. 4.

" pacity, and organs admirably contrived for
" ſpeech, yet in his caſe, there was a neceſſity of
" his being immediately inſtructed by God, be-
" cauſe it was impoſſible he ſhould have invented
" ſpeech, and words to be ſpoken, ſo ſoon as his
" neceſſities required." See bp. *Williams*, *Boyle* Lect.

But there is ſtill in this ſubject, a mine of rich ore, hitherto little known, or ſought for; which wants ſome abler hand, to ſearch into, ſift, and purify it. Let us however break the ground, by offering a few hints to ſhew, that till man had language given him he could not be a rational creature: which will amount to a demonſtration, if it appears, that he can no more think then ſpeak without words; but that theſe are as neceſſarily prior to both, as cauſes to their effects.

Let us then briefly obſerve in this procedure; that the mind cannot think upon nothing; that things themſelves cannot enter the mind, but the ſigns of them may; that words are the marks of eſſence, by which it diſtinguiſhes things, one from another; and till furniſhed with them, is incapable of acting. This Mr. *Wollaſton*, (§ 5. p. 122.) proves at large, and appeals for the truth of what he advances, or, that a man cannot think without words, to every one's obſervation of what paſſeth within himſelf. Nor is it poſſible to be otherwiſe, becauſe words are the only bodies, or vehicles, by which the ſenſe and meaning of all propoſitions are conveyed; ſo that till the mind is ſtored with them, it has nothing to judge by, think or reaſon upon.

Mr

Mr. *Locke* muſt have given great light into this
mote and delicate ſubject, had he taken language
to his original plan. He ſaw the defect, but too
te, yet grants enough for our purpoſe. " That
the mind is as white paper, void of all characters."
ff. l. 2. c. 1. § 2. has no writings, ſignatures, or
ppreſſions, which are the corner ſtone of natural
ligion. Whence then has it the materials of
owledge? not altogether from ideas of ſenſation
d reflexion. But, " as all men, in their thinking
and reaſoning, make uſe of words." L. 4. c. 5.
4. that is, can neither think or reaſon without
em; therefore, " God furniſhed man with lan-
guage——and altho' he had by nature his or-
gans ſo faſhioned, as to be fit to frame articulate
ſounds, which we call words, this was not ſuf-
ficient to produce language." L. 3. c. 1. § 1.
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ng, that men did, and an hord of ſavages now
ay, invent a language.

It was alſo, " farther neceſſary, that he ſhould
be able to uſe theſe ſounds, as ſigns of internal
conceptions, and to make them ſtand as marks
for the ideas within his own mind, whereby they
might be made known to others, and the thoughts
of mens minds be conveyed from one to ano-
ther." (Ib. § 2.) So that without words, men
ould not underſtand, learn, or teach, any thing
at was ſaid.

And as " the mind makes words to ſtand for
the real eſſences of things." L. 3. c. 10. § 18.

It could not, in the abſence of things, without words, diſtinguiſh, judge of, think, or reaſon upon them; having no marks, whereby they could be recollected, or preſented to, the intellectual faculties. Whence, "the extent and certainty of "knowledge has ſo near a connexion with words, "that unleſs their force and manner of ſignifica-"tion be firſt well obſerv'd, there can be very "little ſaid clearly and pertinently concerning know-"ledge." L. 3. c. 9. § 21. that is, we could know nothing, be certain of nothing. "And were "language, as the inſtrument of knowledge, more "thoroughly weighed, the way to knowledge would "lie a great deal opener then it does." Ib.

Certainly, for knowledge is not to be had, without the proper inſtrument and means of attaining it. And language being the only path, or avenue, to wiſdom, ſhews the force of our apoſtle's divine philoſophy; "That faith cometh by hearing, and "hearing by the word of God;" that being the only conduit, in receiving or conveying truth. For all we learn is *by* words, all we think is *in* words, and without them, could neither learn, think, or teach, much leſs have the moſt diſtant conception of *things not ſeen.*

The illation ſeems very plain. Language cannot be contrived without thought and knowledge: but the mind cannot have thought or knowledge till it has language: Therefore language muſt be previouſly taught, before man could become a rational creature: and none could teach him but God.

An additional light may be caſt on this ſubject, from obſerving the prodigious uſe of NAMES, in

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acquiring, and retaining knowledge: for they being the objects of thought, the mind can neither describe, define, or even conceive any ſubſtance, till acquainted with the name, and meaning of it; as that not only diſtinguiſhes ſubſtances from each other, but is (as ſome ſpeak) the mark both of eſſence and union; the bond which ties together the ſeveral properties peculiar to each, and that conſtitute things what they are. For the qualities and powers of ſubſtances, which make up the complex idea of them, are images too ſubtil and fleeting for the mind to detain, without ſome mark of eſſence whereunto it can annex them.

On what other account, but to have a right knowledge of the creatures, over which a dominion was given, did God bring before *Adam*, every beaſt of the field, and fowl of the air, to ſee what he would call them? and "whatſoever *Adam* called "every living creature, that was the name there-"of." Nor is it reaſonable to imagine, that God ſhould thus miraculouſly inſtruct him in the knowledge of his fellow-creatures, before that of his Creator. On the contrary, we find the words, *God*, and *Lord God*, uſed upwards of forty times, in the two firſt chapters of *Geneſis*; which were names, and marks, not only of exiſtence, but of all the glorious perfections revealed of the nature. Hence, the name of God, in numberleſs paſſages of ſcripture, ſtands for God himſelf. Gen.ii.19.

For as a name cannot be given to what we have no notion of; and man is invincibly ignorant of *things not ſeen*: ſo neither could he diſcover, underſtand, or apply, any attribute or property, till

till he knew the name of the ſubſtance, to which alone they appertained; and no information of them could be had, but from the word of God, that is, revelation *.

The ſubject is inexhauſtible. It however appears, that the mind can have no other objects of thought, but words, and names; which therefore muſt be prior to recollection, reflexion, or any mode of thinking. And it is as great an abſurdity to ſay, that a man without reaſon, could create language for the inſtrument of reaſon; as that he could create a world for himſelf, before he was in being.

For the rational faculty conſiſts in a power, to exert its ſeveral operations, on the materials, it receives, and underſtands; to record, or diſpoſe of them in their proper cells; to call forth, and ſeperately conſider them; to divide, compare, and judge of their agreement or diſagreement; and thereby becomes able to form propoſitions, and draw concluſions; that is, to think, and reaſon.

But the inſtrumental cauſe of reaſon muſt be previous to it. What was previous to reaſon muſt be taught by ſome intelligent agent. No ſuch agent was prior to the firſt man, but God (or ſpiritual beings at his appointment). What he taught, was by revelation. Conſequently, revelation was (or there can be no error in believing ſo) the firſt principle of all knowledge, and the means whereby the creator intended man ſhould become both a rational and religious creature.

* Some of the *Greek* fathers ſay, that God muſt be unnameable, but by himſelf, becauſe there was none other before him, to give him a name---*Plato* ὐδ' ἄρα ὄνομα ἐστιν αὐτῷ. Parmenid.

N. B

N. B. Tho' Mr. *Locke* be frequently mention'd in this, and on other heads as being the ſtandard of knowledge to the preſent age: yet there are grounds to apprehend, that the evils far exceed the advantages, which truth received from his celebrated eſſay. See Appendix A.

§ 4th. That revelation was the origin of religion, as well as of ſpeech and reaſon, will appear from conſidering the true ſtate of man at his firſt entrance into the world.

The endowments which diſtinguiſhed him from other animals, were the capacity of reaſon, and a freedom of will; one to underſtand the law, which was to be his rule of action; the other, to determine his will, when at perfect liberty, whether to obey, or not. For the law muſt be known before it can be a rule; and when known, it is the choice of intelligent beings, which makes an action their own, ſo as thereby to become accountable creatures, or capable of rewards and puniſhments, to which nothing ſubjects them but voluntary, choſen, actions.

The proper ſtate to exerciſe theſe peculiar faculties, muſt be that of probation, and without a law given, they could neither be tried or proved; nor could that have any force without ſanctions annexed. God therefore enter'd into a *Covenant* with man, wherein it was ſtipulated, that obedience ſhould entitle him to the rewards, diſobedience ſubject him to the penalty of the law.

Such was the firſt ſtate of man: God gave him a perfect declaration of his will, or, of whatever was re-

required of him to *know* or *do*. The covenant then entered into was that of WORKS: the condition; Luke x. 28. "do this, and live." A ſinleſs obedience was demanded. The reward, a tranſlation to the preſence and enjoyment of God in heaven, without a ſeparation of ſoul and body. The puniſhment, death, tomporal and eternal.

Two things muſt here be carefully noted. (1ſt.) That none could declare, promiſe, or confer, an eternal life, but the eternal God. (2dly.) That where a ſinleſs obedience was requir'd, the law muſt be full and perfect, an exact meaſure of acting, not the leaſt part defective, no duty to be obſerved, or that could poſſibly be broken, which was not plainly propounded and underſtood. For as without a law, there can be neither obedience or tranſgreſſion; ſo an imperfect law is a contradiction, as being a rule that cannot regulate.

We may add; it ſeems no way incongruous with the divine wiſdom, to have given man a conſiſtent ſcheme of religion, the beſt adapted, and moſt ſuitable to his faculties, which ſhould oblige the whole race of mankind, then virtually in *Adam*.

Such, there is great reaſon to believe, was the law in paradiſe; that it began with time, and ſhall not end but when eternity commences, without having the leaſt tittle altered, whilſt human nature and the preſent frame of things endure.

§ 5th. On the breach of the firſt covenant, God vouchſafed to admit man, into a ſecond, or that of GRACE. And if revelation was neceſſary in his ſtate of innocence, much more ſo muſt it be in the

that of apoſtacy, to preſerve him from an utter deſperation; ſince on forfeiting the divine favour, he had no further claim to it, nor could have the leaſt certainty of his creator's goodneſs, or will, relating to his eternal welfare; nor any hopes of eſcaping that dreadful puniſhment he had incurred.

Every thing here is ſo far beyond the reach of human reaſon, that, when declared, it is the moſt aſtoniſhing event that falls within the compaſs of it. So that to reveal a deſign of mercy, and a promiſe of forgiveneſs, thro' a Meſſiah, was a ſtupendous inſtance of divine benignity; and as neceſſary to man's preſent comfort, as redemption was to his future happineſs.

In this amazing tranſaction, we muſt look higher than any dealings had with man, *viz.* to the eternal purpoſes of God concerning his reſtoration; wherein "the Lamb was ſlain from the foundation "of the world." And "the hope of eternal life, "which God, that cannot lie, promiſed before the "world began." As alſo "grace," at the ſame time "given." Rev. xiii. 8. Titus i. 2. 2 Tim. i. 9.

Is it then poſſible to believe, that a covenant ſhould be eſtabliſhed, a promiſe made, and a grace given to obtain it; yet the perſon, for whoſe benefit alone they were intended, ſhould have no knowledge or aſſurance of them? This is what neither reaſon, nor religion, can ſuppoſe.

Here it muſt alſo be remembered (1ſt.) that there was no change in the original law, but only in the conditions of the covenant; inſtead of a perfect obedience, a ſincere one, with faith and repentance, was now required; whereby a deliverance

from penalty, and a new way to immortality, were opened. (2dly.) That ſinners ſhould be ſaved; by what method, or on what terms, re-admitted into favour; yet the law ſatisfied, and the truth of an immutable decree preſerved; were ſecrets hid in God, what no created intelligence could diſcover, or comprehend. The angels ſtill *deſire to look into* this myſtery, but cannot fathom it; for the *love of Chriſt paſſeth knowledge.*

Thus was a redeemer ordained in heaven, revealed in paradiſe, believed by the patriarchs, ſpoken of by the prophets, and relied on by all. The inference then is juſt, that the eſſentials of true piety were from the beginning: for what is religion, but firſt to know the true God, and then, by faith and obedience, thro' the merits of the Meſſiah, to hope for remiſſion of ſins, and eternal life? every article of which entered the world by revelation.

It has alſo been ſaid by learned men; that ſuppoſing the hiſtory of our firſt parents, as *Moſes* relates it, to be true, we have a plain argument, that our maker, from the beginning, deſigned, and appointed, all that the goſpel requires of us *. And who, but an atheiſt or deiſt, can ſuppoſe it not to be true?

§ 6th. The whole of religion conſiſts in this
Matt. xv. 16, 18. " if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. Let us then further enquire, when the commands of God were at firſt given, and in what manner continued.

* Biſhop *Bradford*, *Boyle* Lect.

Grot.

Grotius tells us, " that God three ſeveral times " gave a law, which obliged all mankind, to whom " the knowledge of it came; after the creation, " after the flood, and by Chriſt. *"

The father of the firſt world received the commands immediately from God. Theſe were handed down with purity, to the parent of the ſecond, a preacher of righteouſneſs, who drew up a ſummary of them, ever after called, the ſtatutes of *Adam*, as derived from him; or the precepts of the ſons of *Noah*, who tranſmitted them to ſucceeding generations. Of theſe, *Moſes* ſpeaks, before he came to *Sinai*, as his rule of judging between the people; " I do make them know the ſtatutes of God and " his laws." Ex. xviii. 16.

The *Jews* alſo ever allowed, that the *Gentiles* who obſerved them, were entitled to the kingdom of heaven, as being the only eſſential duties, which bound all mankind; and what no place or age could diſpenſe with. For the decalogue was not a new ſet of laws, but a repetition of the former, and in ſubſtance the very ſame.

Our Saviour alſo repeats every commandment, as ſaid of old, in ancient times, or from the beginning; and neither added to, nor diminiſhed from them †. They contained the love of God, and of our neigh-

* De Jur. Bel. & P. L. 1. c. 1. § 16, 17.

†. Dr. *Clarke* grants that the commandments were originally delivered by God, and as expounded to us by Chriſt, are ſtill in ſubſtance the ſame. Catec. p. 149. Dr. *Whitby* denies that our Saviour added one precept not virtually contained therein. Append. in *Mat.* 5. Mr. *Locke* affirms that the rule of the covenant of works was never aboliſhed, tho' the rigour were abated. The duties enjoined in it, are duties ſtill; their obligation had never ceaſed, nor a willful neglect of them ever diſpenſed with. Reaſon of Chriſtianity, p. 216. 255.

bour, on which hang all the law and the prophets: theſe Chriſt came to fulfill, and declared, that not a tittle thereof ſhould fail, till heaven and earth paſs away.

Let it alſo be obſerved, that as the 10th commandment is the ſeal to, and a fence round all the reſt, by forbidding evil thoughts, as well as outward acts, not to commit adultery with the eye, or murder in the heart; it neceſſarily follows, that the revealed will of God, not only commands, but determines, the fitneſs and obligation of, what are called, moral actions. For if no human tribunal can preſcribe rules to mens thoughts or deſires, how they ſhall think, and what they ſhall love; it is impoſſible that reaſon ſhould have framed theſe commands, becauſe none but an all-wiſe God, who knows the hearts of men, can take hold of what no eye ſees; give laws to, bind, and ſubject to puniſhment, the moſt ſecret irregularities.

So that if truth, and purity of heart, be any part of morality, it muſt depend on the revealed will of God, and is the ſame with religion. If they are not, whatever nature or reaſon may be ſaid to advance, will prove of little worth or comfort, to a ſerious chriſtian *.

* Bp. *Burnet* ſays, " the foundation of morality is religion: " and that the ſenſe of God, that he is, and that he is a " rewarder and puniſher, is a foundation of religion." in Art. 7. p. 102. Whence it will follow, that if ſuch future ſanctions are not knowable by natural reaſon, it could not infer any obligation (which is founded in them) on moral duties.—So others affirm, that the fitneſs of virtue to the nature of things is far from ſuperinducing any obligation, or laying any foundation for natural conſcience, See Dr. *Handcock*, *Boyle* Lect. Therefore duties ſo derived, are neither law, nor goſpel, nor any thing worth contending for.

Another

Another obſervation is, that the duties of both tables are equally poſitive, enjoined by ſpecial revelation, before men could ſpeculate about them. And as God never eſtabliſhed a covenant, without appointing ſome outward ſigns, or memorials, as pledges of his promiſes and man's obedience; the trueſt diſtinction of duties perhaps may be, into LEGAL and FEDERAL, precepts of the law, and precepts of the covenant. Both are poſitively commanded, by the ſame divine authority; and let men call them what they pleaſe, where God does not remit the obligation, no human devices can.

§ 7th. The next ſtep in our enquiry is, whether, and in what manner ſuch a body of laws, or religion, were known to the world. And after premiſing the neceſſity of carrying in our thought, the vaſt difference between the patriarchal, and moſaical law, the confounding of which has produced great errors and miſtakes; we may leave the deciſion of the preſent queſtion to learned *Cumberland*, who allows, and fully proves, that the patriarchs, both before and after the flood, had laws revealed, and promulged, by the ſupreme authority, directing their voluntary actions to the chief happineſs of man, armed with the ſanctions of eternal rewards and puniſhments, and which extended to all mankind †.

So

† De leg. Patriarchal, p. 401, &c. This he explains at large; and ſhews from many undeniable inſtances, that the patriarchs had diligently obſerved all the great commands, which reſpect God or man, long before the tables were given on *Sinai*, (p 443.) And remarks, that *Moſes* ſeems to have wrote the whole hiſtory preceding the decalogue, for prudent readers

So clearly does this illuſtrious defender of nature, not only confirm our main poſition, but alſo what has been ſuggeſted: that as there is an unity of deſign thro' all the works of God, and the whole material ſyſtem is directed, by ſome never ceaſing principle to its appointed end; ſo it is not unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, the rational part of this lower creation, ſhould have ſome ſtanding law, whereby to live here, and be judged hereafter,

That ſuch a rule did ſubſiſt from the beginning, appears undeniable, from the many patriarchs, who walked with God, and were found righteous before him. Their ſignal inſtances of faith, and immoveable expectations of a life to come, alſo demonſtrate a preceding revelation of the divine promiſes." "For as to eternal rewards and puniſh-
" ments, natural law knows nothing of them *."

2 Tim. i. 10. St. *Paul* indeed ſays, "that Chriſt brought life
" and immortality to light." But the word φωτίζαντος properly ſignifies to illuſtrate, caſt greater light on, and more clearly diſcover, what was known before: no other expoſition is reconcilable with ſcripture;

Heb. xi. and the ſame apoſtle confirms it; that "the fa-
" thers died in faith, not having received the pro-

readers to learn, that one God, the creator and preſerver of men, had govern'd them (as ſervants of one God, and ſons of one man, whether *Adam* or *Noah*, p. 402.) by laws agreeable to thoſe he was about to give his peculiar people, p 412. For the ten commandments were only the chief heads of the law given of old to the patriarchs, p. 447.——And our own great Selden has ſhewn, it was the opinion of all the primitive chriſtians, as well as his own, that God declared to mankind, from the very beginning of things, that he would be a rewarder of the good, and render to every man according to his works. N. & G. L. 1. c. 2. § 6.

* *Cumberland*, ib. p. 407.

" miſe

" miſes; but having ſeen them afar off, were
" perſuaded of them, and embraced them, plain-
" ly declaring that they deſire a better coun-
" try, that is, an heavenly; wherefore God is not
" aſhamed to be called their God." And the hope
of all good men, was to enjoy " the pleaſures, Pſ.xvi.11.
" which are at God's right hand, for evermore."
Our Saviour ſays, " Search the ſcriptures, for in John v.
" them ye think ye have eternal life;" which proves 39.
their belief of that article, and their agreement that
it was revealed in the holy writings.

So our own church teaches (Art. 7.) " that both
" in the old and new teſtament, everlaſting life is
" offered to mankind by Chriſt." For it was a
ſtanding revelation; part of the " everlaſting goſ- Rev. xiv.
" pel preached unto them that dwell upon the 6.
" earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and
" tongue, and people †."

Particulars of the pious and holy men of old, are
needleſs; when the apoſtle, after the liſt of heroes
recorded, adds, " that time would fail him to enu- Heb. xi.
" merate all, who wrought righteouſneſs, obtained
" the promiſes, &c." They are noble inſtances of
an amazing fortitude, and unſhaken zeal, by which
in all things they became more then conquerors;
and by having reſpect to a future recompence, ob-
tained a good report, and are ſet forth as enſamples
to us. Enſamples, equall'd by few, excell'd by
none!

† And tho' ſome object, that the words, everlaſting life, are not to be found in the books of *Moſes*; yet even bp. *Burnet* allows, " that it is clear *Moſes* did all along ſuppoſe, the being of " God, the creation of the world, the promiſe of the Meſſiah, " and a future ſtate, as things well known, and carried down " by tradition to his days." in Art. 7.

And

And in what do the prophetick writings differ from the goſpel? both preach repentance for the remiſſion of ſins, perſuade men to forſake their evil ways, and then promiſe that God would remember their iniquities no more. In conſequence of which, no humiliations can be deeper, no ſorrow for guilt more afflicting, no converſion more ſincere, or ſupplications for pardon and acceptance more earneſt, then what every where occur, in the patriarchal and ſucceeding ages.

It is alſo obſervable, that as their religion and hopes chiefly centred in the Meſſiah; their notices of him, from the earlieſt times, were ſo frequent, that every prophet who aroſe in *Iſrael*, ſpake plainly
1 Ep. i 19. of him. "Receive (ſays St. *Peter*) the ſalvation "of your ſouls; of which ſalvation (thro' Chriſt) "the prophets have enquired and ſearched dili- "gently, &c." So that every age had its evangeliſts. The paſſion and reſurrection of Chriſt (thro' which alone ſalvation could be had) with the glory that ſhould follow, were articles of the prophets, as well as of the apoſtles creed.

Tit. ii. 11. If then "the grace of God which bringeth ſal- "vation, hath appeared to all men," and the patriarchs were ſaved by it; what difference is there between their law and ours? for, when all is ſaid, to believe in the true God and his Meſſiah; a remiſſion of ſins thro' him, on a ſincere obedience and repentance; a reſurrection; the ſouls ſurvivance; and a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments; ever were, and will be, the ſum of all religion.

This

This they did: but there could be no knowledge of the covenant, or its conditions, till declared; no faith in a Meſſiah, till revealed; no proof of obedience, without a law; no ſubjection to rewards or puniſhments, without a freedom of choice; no power to do what is well pleaſing to God without the aid of his holy ſpirit. Hence judicious *Mede* owns, that the goſpel, or glad tydings of ſalvation, to be attained by Chriſt, were as ancient as the time of man's ſin; and afterwards repeated and continued, p. 110.

§ 8th. Of the MOSAICAL law, little need be ſaid; as being of a late date, and narrow extent. The patriarchal was from the beginning, and renewed to many: thus, "God preached, before, Gal. iii. 8
"the goſpel to *Abraham*." That is, before his circumciſion; and this notice of juſtification by a Meſſiah was revealed to him, who had been bred in idolatry 430 years before the law of *Moſes*. Nor was the decalogue any part of this law: *Moſes* plainly diſtinguiſhes them; "The Lord delivered unto Deut. iv. 13.
"you his covenant, even the ten commandments." They had been long under both; and *Moſes* was only the meſſenger, not the lawgiver.

God delivered one; the other was wrote by *Moſes* in a book. After their falling into idolatry; Exod. xxiv. 7.
and laid upon them as a puniſhment, or burthen, rather than a religion, having nothing of true piety in it. God himſelf ſays, "I gave them my ſta- Ezek. xx.
"tutes, and ſhewed them my judgments, which if 11.
"a man do, he ſhall even live in them." Theſe were the precepts of old, renewed at *Sinai*, and had

Ezek. xx. 21. v. 25. the promiſe of life: "notwithſtanding they rebel "led againſt me," "wherefore I gave them ſta "tutes that were not good, and judgments whereb "they ſhould not live." As the commands o God, they were bound to obſerve them; but th ſtricteſt obedience thereto did not entitle to life.

Many were the eſſential differences between thes laws. The patriarchal was to endure for ever: the moſaical but for a time. That obliged all man kind: this only a ſmall colony, to whom it was ſeperate municipal conſtitution; as charters to body of citizens, who are nevertheleſs bound b the common law of the land.

The obſervation then that ariſes, is; that if th pious *Jews* were ſaved under it, they were not ſave by it. It could puniſh or remit offences, commit ted againſt its own ordinances, according as th caſe was; but "not purge the conſcience from dea Heb. ix. 14. "works, to ſerve the living God." Eternal lif and death were no part of it; but ſtill remained i force, as ſanctions of the original law and cove nant.

Hence the frequent aſſurances, that ſins wer not remitted, nor juſtification to be had from th obſervance of it: yet the *Hebrews* never doubte that the moſt preſumptuous ſins, idolatry, murde injuſtice, or oppreſſion, for which no mercy coul be found by the law of *Moſes*, would, on a ſin cere repentance, be fully pardon'd; conſequent by the terms of another covenant, and ſo we known, that their hopes of eternity reſted upon it.

The ſins of *David* were irremiſſible in the cou of *Iſrael*, yet he knew forgiveneſs was to be h

that of heaven. On this ground, he confeſſed, pplicated for, and obtained abſolution. " Againſt thee only have I ſinned, deliver me from blood-guiltineſs, O God, thou God of my ſalvation." his muſt be only thro' the Meſſiah, for there never was any name, given under heaven, where-by men could be ſaved, but that of Chriſt Jeſus."

§ 9th. As *law* is the rule of life, and meaſure of ction, it will be neceſſary, for a further confirma-ion of the ſubject before us, to conſider ſome pe-uliarities eſſential to it.

Now, law in its primary notion implies a reſtraint f liberty, whereby a free agent is directed to act, r not to act, in ſuch a manner, as, before he was ot obliged to; and that under the pain of guilt nd puniſhment.

Whence a noble author lays it down for an un-queſtionable truth, " that no actions are good or bad, honeſt or vile, till made ſo by ſome law; it being certain, that antecedently to the impoſi-tion of any law, all actions muſt be eſteemed in-different." *Puffendorff*, L. N. L. 2. c. 3. § 4.

And Mr. *Locke*, " that what duty is, cannot be known, without a law." L. 2. c. 28. &c.

" And by referring their actions to the divine law, men judge whether they are duties or ſins." o. § 7.

For as God created man a free agent, no one had ght or power to fetter his liberty, but the lord of ature; which he ſuper-induced, by giving a reve-tion of what he required: nor could this have he force of a law, till ſignified to man after the

manner of men; that is, by diſcourſe and communication; by ſomething that taught him, and obliged him. See Duct. *Dub.* L. 2. c. 1.

From theſe principles it will follow, that all duties were of external inſtitution, not reaſoned out, but abſolutely poſitive, before any act of obedience or ſin could be performed: for law being the ſtandard of actions, by that they muſt be deemed lawful or unlawful; and being alſo the meaſure of them, muſt contain every particular to be done or avoided. All which muſt be duly promulged, becauſe law cannot bind, till declared, and known to be ſuch.

This obtained from the beginning. God was the law-giver; revelation the publiſher: and thence aroſe ſuch difference in the actions of men; "The "divine law being the only meaſure of duty or "ſin." *Locke* Ib. § 8.

§ 10th. From the ſame authority proceeds another eſſential of law, viz. its OBLIGATION, without which it could not operate, but remain a dead letter, of none effect. This ariſes on two accounts, (1ſt.) from reſtraint of liberty, with reſpect to actions, which elſe were at our choice; and (2dly,) from annexing rewards or puniſhments, to the uſe or abuſe of our freedom; which is the moſt rational obligation to determine the human will. Theſe ſanctions are the great enforcement of law, as drawing good or evil upon us, from our obſervance or breach of it, by the decree of the law-maker. "without them a law cannot be ſuppoſed; ſince "it would be in vain, for one intelligent being to

"ſet

ſet a rule to the actions of another, if he had it not in his power, to reward the compliance with, and puniſh deviation from his rule." *Locke* . 2. c. 28. § 6. &c. See Appendix B.

For as actions cannot be ſaid to be good or bad, here there is nothing to direct, or determine the ill; ſo none are ſubject to the ſanctions of law, ut the voluntary and choſen: and the being con-inced of theſe ſanctions, induces a bond or tie, act, or not to act; as it ſubjects to that happi-eſs or miſery, which the law has annexed to the ree choice of ſuch or ſuch actions.

Law then is the will of a rightful ſuperior, com-manding or forbidding; who has a juſt authority ver him that is commanded, wiſdom to obſerve ow his will is obeyed, and power to reward or pu-iſh accordingly. This is the prerogative of God lone, as creator he has ſupreme authority over the reature. He is lord of the ſoul, can take notice f its inward tranſactions, and moſt ſecret faults, nd inflict puniſhment equal to tranſgreſſion. There-ore he only can command and bind the conſci-nce, becauſe none other can judge of it, and what-ver does not ſo oblige, can be neither religion, or law.

Again; the ſanctions of law muſt be commenſu-te to the whole of their beings who are ſubjected them, or the obligation would be, but in part. then man is intended for immortality, ſuch muſt the ſanctions of the law he is bound by; and he e only law-giver who has authority to enact em; and power to reward with everlaſting life, puniſh with eternal damnation. Theſe could

not

not be ſet before us, but by revelation: therefore the revealed word, which will be the rule of judgment hereafter, muſt be at preſent, the only principle and meaſure of human actions.

For as every thing blameable, or commendable, muſt have ſome rule to try its goodneſs by: "hence the divine law is the only true touchſtone, "even of *moral rectitude*, ſince by comparing their "actions to that, it is, that men judge of their "moſt conſiderable *moral good, or evil*; that is, "whether as duties, or ſins, they are likely to pro-"cure them, happineſs or miſery from the hands of "the almighty." *Locke*, Ib. § 8.

§ 11th. If no authority but the ſupreme, can induce an obligation, the moſt ſacred regard muſt be had, not to admit any bond on conſcience, but what has a manifeſt and divine right to it.

This will convince us, that no judicature on earth, has ſuch enacting or compulſive power, but what is virtually, or formally, derived from the law of God—That human precepts may adviſe, or perſuade, but cannot controul—That reaſon may gain aſſent, but not be a rule of obedience, till it has ſome unerring method of knowing what is reaſonable or unreaſonable; which it is plain the heathens never had, ſince it ever failed them in the particular applications of good and evil—That no ſingle perſon can oblige another, having no right to it, or ſovereign juriſdiction over him, in matters of duty and ſin—That laws entered into, by a combination of men, in ſociety, can be of force no longer then the agreement laſts, which every one may

may retire from at pleaſure. Nor during ſuch compact, can any force of human command, inveſt ſuch precepts with the power of obligation; they muſt have this before they can be received as rightful laws, and that only depends on their being the will of a rightful ſuperior, that is God*.

Nor are moderns leſs inconſiſtent, or contradictory, in fixing this tie of obligation. There is the confuſed cry of a multitude, lo here, and lo there. But if one ſyſtem be right, all the reſt are wrong; and which is right, has not been hitherto agreed; which proves they have no unqueſtionable principles to go upon. Even their beloved ſubject, of drawing obligation, from the eternal reaſon and fitneſs of things, lately imported from ſome unknown ideal region, is ſet forth in ſo many different lights, that it may ſerve to amuſe, but not to inſtruct, or convince.

The ſcriptures conſtantly direct us, for the learning of truth and righteouſneſs, to the will, the word, the law, and commandment of God, as being perfect, ſure, what endures for ever, enlightens the eye, converts the ſoul, gives underſtanding to the ſimple, and able to make all men wiſe unto ſalvation: but never ſend us to proportions or congruities, for any ſuch purpoſe; therefore whatever names ſhall teach them, we are ſure that doctrine is not from heaven. And the viſible effect of it, whether intended or not, has been, to ſet the minds of men looſe from any obligations of religion; which is a ſure way, firſt to render it weak and

* This *Plato* allows, that God, and no mortal, is the firſt and original cauſe of all law. De leg. 1.

con-

contemptible, and then to baniſh it out of the world †. So that if natural religion was urged by ſome to oppoſe atheiſm; the conceſſions and arguments of their ſucceſſors laid a ſure foundation for, and are now the very citadel of infidelity: a ſtrange chaos of divinity has been introduced; but, from their principles, *Tindal* neither has been, nor can be, anſwered.

If God created things after the counſel of his own pleaſure, and rectitude of will (as to act otherwiſe would be a denial of himſelf) all their proportions, relations, and fitneſſes, are of his appointment; creatures, which, of themſelves, cannot oblige; nor have the force of law, till a delegation of divine power to them is undeniably manifeſted.

If their reaſons were eternal, obligatory in themſelves, antecedent to the commands of God, or any

† The later and more candid writers on natural religion, abate ſomewhat of its rigour, in defining obedience, to be doing that which God commands, becauſe he did command it. *Butler* Analogy, pt. 1. c. 5. p. 99. Which therefore muſt be prior to obedience or obligation.---Others allow, "that the law of nature "does not receive its obliging force, barely from the fitneſs or "agreeableneſs of things as ſuch, but from the will of God, "who only has both right and power to oblige us;" yet ſup- "poſe them declarative of the will of God, and a means of pro- "mulging it to us." *Cockman* Serm. *Oxford*, 1731. But where has God acquainted us, with an intent of declaring his will by ſuch method? if no where, it is only a device of men. We are again told, "that this perfect law was obligatory upon man "as ſoon as created, ſo as to behave himſelf according to the "fitneſs of things, and the dignity of his nature." They ſhould alſo explain the poſſibility of this, without inſpiration, that is being revealed. Or were it poſſible; yet after the fall, the re- lations between God and man were totally changed; and if the terms of divine juſtice and mercy were free, man muſt be in- vincibly ignorant of them. Tho' for the ſake of oppoſing re- velation, it has, with equal folly and prophaneneſs, been aſ- ſerted, that reaſon could determine, what God could do, and was obliged to do.

way independent of his will: then infinite freedom was reſtrained by them, and infinite power neceſſitated to act as it did, and not otherwiſe. Which muſt lead us up to ſome archetype or principle, external to, coeval with, and indeed, ſuperior to God, ſince he was obliged to command them, in the form, as they pre-exiſted.

Or, allowing God to be the firſt cauſe, it ſeems very unconſequential, that the relations of things, ſhould, when produced into being out of nothing, become of eternal neceſſity, abſolute, unalterable, and independent of that cauſe, to which their very exiſtence is owing.

To modeſt minds, it is ſufficient to ſay with ſcripture, "God ſaw every thing that he had made, "and behold it was very good:" good in itſelf, as made by him, from whom no evil can come; and fitted, by him, for its appointed ſtation, in the viſible or intellectual world; therefore muſt be agreeable to the pureſt reaſon; as God, who cannot lie, was the author of both. But it is the creative, revealed word, not nature, teaches that the fitneſs of things to virtue, leads to everlaſting happineſs.

And that God has an abſolute right, over all their fitneſſes, and relations, appears hence: that tho' no human power can diſpenſe with the leaſt of them; yet he has ſuſpended the weightieſt parts of the law, even juſtice and mercy; as in the caſe of *Abraham*, the *Iſraelites* in *Egypt*, and many others. He can enact or repeal, perpetuate, change, or abrogate his own laws at pleaſure: and when he interpoſes they ceaſe to oblige, therefore can have no obligation, but from him.

§ 12th, Among other peculiarities of law, we muſt not omit the ſcriptural acceptation of it. And there we meet with none univerſally binding, but the divine law, as a revealed diſtribution of the divine mind; the authority, extent, and obligation of which are ſummed up in this ſhort ſentence, "fear "God, and keep his commandments, for this is "the whole of man," all that is neceſſary to attain the utmoſt perfection of his being. But the command muſt be given, before it can be kept; nor can there be ſin or duty, but from a voluntary omiſſion or performance of what that enjoins.

In this the ſcriptures are every where expreſs.

Rom. vii. 7. "That we had not known ſin but by the law."

Ib. iv. 5. For, "where there is no law, there is no tranſgreſ-"ſion." Conſequently nothing good or evil, ſo as to be matter of reward or puniſhment, but by

Ib. vii. 8. ſome law; for as much as "ſin without the law is "dead." Has not the nature of it, which conſiſts in guilt, and ſubjection to the legal penalty. Be-

Ib. v. 23. cauſe, "ſin is not imputed, where there is no law," ſo as to condemn to death. But as "the ſting of "death," what makes it ſo embittering and dread-

1 Cor. xv. 56. ful, *is ſin*; ſo "the ſtrength of ſin is the law," without which it could not hurt, or bring guilt and death upon us: but where the law ſubſiſts, its condemning power is in full force.

Gen. iv. 7. So it was from the beginning. "If thou do "well," ſays the Almighty to *Cain*, "ſhalt thou "not be accepted? and if thou doſt not well, ſin "lieth at the door." or puniſhment ready to be executed.

Pla

Place matters in what light we will, to make man, the inventor, and author of law, will be found contrary to reaſon, and experience, as well as ſcripture. To *reaſon*, becauſe it has ever fail'd; has no power to reward or puniſh; and the law-giver who binds, muſt be greater than he that is bound. To *experience*, as that ſhews what little advancements the wiſeſt ages made, in the knowledge of God, and true religion. Their ſolemneſt worſhip was abominable, their allowed morals moſt infamous, without any diſtinction of good and evil, but what cuſtom made. Nor in all the volumes of antiquity, is a compleat table of duties and ſins, or a perfect rule of action, founded on juſt principles, and deduced by proper mediums, to be met with.

§ 13th. A great variety of arguments, ſupported by our ableſt reaſoners, have been offered. And if it ſhall in any meaſure appear from them, that religion entered the world at the creation; and that no law can be a rule of action, or oblige, but that of God. The inference ſought for will be true; that no ſtate, or religion, could be prior to revelation: and as none were ſubſequent thereto, but what might, and did, receive benefit therefrom; no place, or uſe, can be found, for a ſtate, law, or religion of nature; being altogether incompatible with an antecedently given revelation.

Conſequently, all that has been, or can be ſaid, in favour of them, amounts to no more than this; that men found out, what God had made known before. Or if it be argued, that reaſon could have

diſcovered theſe things, without the aid of revelation; it is begging the queſtion, incapable of proof, and a vain preſumption, in aſcribing to the human faculties a power which they never exerciſed, nor from any judgment to be formed of them, were able to do.

Nor does it carry the leaſt probability of truth; ſince the wiſer heathens always aſcribed religion to the Gods, and acknowledged the neceſſity of a light from them. And every age is a demonſtration, that the further men diſperſed from the patriarchal ſeats, where revelation was never extinguiſhed, and came the nearer to an un-inſtructed ſtate, which is properly that of nature, the deeper they ſunk in ignorance and brutality.

But this matter may be referred to a ſhort iſſue. Such great and glorious things have been ſpoken by learned men, of this bleſſed ſtate; when reaſon was a goſpel, and nature a ſufficient guide to final happineſs; when men had perfect knowledge, untainted innocence, right notions of God, knew his voice, and were ſo intimate, that one might almoſt ſay, they had a perſonal acquaintance with him. Now if there be any thing more than a dream, in all this, let them vouchſafe to tell, but likewiſe prove, when, and where, this charming ſcene was exhibited; whether in *Egypt* or *Greece*, in *Hudſon's* bay, or the mountains of the moon; and diſpute is at an end.

If they cannot ſhew one tittle of this; not a ſingle fact, among the many advanced, that has the leaſt truth or reality in it. They muſt pardon others, for not joining in their fairy dance, the amuſe-

muſement of luxuriant fancies, a phantom raiſed up to exerciſe the wit of men, and exalt their own underſtandings above meaſure. For what contradictions or abſurdities can be greater, than an eternally exiſting religion and law, for an eternally non-exiſting ſtate? the whole is alike viſionary, and never ſubſiſted (out of Paradiſe) but in the human imagination.

§ 14th. But the ſtrongeſt plea for natural religion is ſtill behind. A right knowledge of God is, on all hands, allowed to be the foundation of religion; it is therefore aſſumed as a poſtulatum, that men, by the uſe of their faculties, might, and that the Heathens did, diſcover the true God, without the help of revelation; whence it is inferred, that they who had juſt apprehenſions of the divine attributes, could not be ignorant of a ſervice proper, and agreeable thereto.

But this poſition, the very corner ſtone of deiſm, may not only be diſſented from; but muſt be denied, as abſolutely falſe. Becauſe ſcripture tells us, "that faith is the evidence of things not ſeen;" the only aſſurance of the certainty or reality of what is ſpiritual, inviſible, and future, even the divine exiſtence as well as attributes. This is ſo plainly the apoſtle's intent, *Heb.* xi. 6. that Dr. *Clarke* acknowledges it. "What theſe things are, ſays he, "which being not ſeen by ſenſe, are yet ma-"nifeſt by faith, the apoſtle here declares: they "are, the being of God, and the rewards of the "life to come." Serm. 1. p. 1. Both are inviſible, and equally reſtrained to the ſame method of know-

knowledge: if future rewards are not knowable but by revelation, neither is the divine exiſtence.

The only queſtion before us, is, whether we ſhall believe God or man? men ſay, the heathens did know God. Scripture the direct contrary, that

1 Theſſ. iv. 5. 1 Cor. i. 21. Ep. ii. 12. Gal. iv. 9. Pſ. xcvi. 5. Deut. xxxii. 16. Eſth. xiv. 11. 1 Cor. viii. 4.

" the Gentiles" knew not God, that " the world " by wiſdom," or any diſquiſitions of the human mind, " knew not God," were " ſtrangers to, " without hope," and ἄθεοι abſolute atheiſts, " without God in the world," " ignorant of him, but " afterwards knew God." For " all the Gods of " the nations were idols." Creatures, " which are " not Gods." " Things that are not." Empty, vain, and profit not; for " an idol is nothing in " the world, and there is none other God but one," even " the Lord that made the heavens;" whom the Heathens neither knew, nor had heard of.

As to the knowledge of God, every thing, on the ſide of revelation, is plain and conſiſtent. " Faith " is the aſſent to a propoſition, not made out by " the deductions of reaſon, but upon the credit of " the propoſer, as coming from God." *Locke*, L. 4. c. 18. § 2. To believe on the divine teſtimony is a religious act, which has no objects but matter of revelation. This full aſſurance (πληροφορία πίστεως *Heb.* x. 22.) makes every article certain and infallible; no propoſition having more irreſiſtible evidence, than, whatever God affirms, is true

On the ſide of reaſon every thing is dark and impenetrable. By what ſure and certain ſteps, an uninſtructed mind, which never heard of God, could riſe up to a clear comprehenſion of an infinite and uncreated nature. The fable of the giants rearing mounta

mountain upon mountain to invade heaven, has ſomething more ſpecious in it, then the fable of a groveling ſilly *Automathes*, crawling up to light inacceſſible.

Where ſhall the ſavage (for all are ſuch by nature) ſet out? he is without the name of what he is to ſeek; yet names are the only marks of eſſence, to which he could affix any diſcoverable properties: and names cannot be given to things, of which the mind has no apprehenſion. When, or where then could he begin to ſearch for he knew not what?

To ſay a finite mind ſhould enquire after infinity, a term, which it could neither conceive or underſtand, is a contradiction. Yet every thing in God is infinite, and what is immenſe is meaſurable only by itſelf. So that till he could judge of infinity by his narrow reaſon, or meaſure eternity by a ſpan of time, he would be as far off the end of his enquiry, as when he began. Can thoſe enlightned Chriſtians who attribute ſo much to Heathens, comprehend eternity without ſucceſſion, or immenſity without extenſion? do they not confeſs, "there is hardly any thing more inconceivable, than how a "thing ſhould be of itſelf, as God is." *Tillotſon*, V. I. Serm. 48. p. 573. Yet this is but the firſt ſtep in the ladder which muſt reach to heaven.

Mr. *Locke* tells us, "that the firſt being is infi-"nitely more remote, in the real exiſtence of his "nature, from the higheſt and perfecteſt of all "created beings, than the greateſt man, nay pureſt "ſeraphim, is from the moſt contemptible piece "of matter; and conſequently muſt infinitely ex-"ceed, what our narrow underſtandings can con-

ceive

" ceive of him." L. 3. c. 6. § 11. Now what ideas can a man have of what he has not the leaſt conception? yet " knowledge (with him) goes not " beyond our ideas—and our perception of their " agreement or diſagreement with the reality of " things—many of which are beyond our reach." If then there can be no certainty of our ideas agreeing with archetypes infinitely beyond our comprehenſion, there can be no knowledge. So where all the eſſential and diſtinguiſhing properties of a ſubſtance are incomprehenſible, ſuch muſt be its exiſtence alſo. Every thing here is equally boundleſs, and without limits: and the infinite exiſtence of an all-perfect nature, cannot be known but by its infinite perfections.

Such is the taſk men impoſe on their ſpeechleſs, untaught, ignorant animal: to ſearch for, what he muſt know, if he knew any thing, was altogether remote, and unſearchable. But others, who have thoroughly ſtudied the ſubject, teach us, that all things of an incorporeal nature, lie beyond the reach of human knowledge, as we have no grounds from ſenſe or reaſon to lead us to them. That whatever belongs to God the adorable perfection of his attributes, the works of his power, the proceedings of his providence, and the like, are objects of none of our faculties: they lie far beyond the ſphere of natural light, or inquiſition of reaſon.

§ 15th. As the queſtion before us, whether the Heathens did, by the uſe of reaſon, come to a knowledge of the true God, is of great importance, let us examine it in a different manner. The firſt thing

hing in all controverſies, is to determine, and agree n, the true meaning of words. And if we under-tand the name, God, in a ſcriptural or chriſtian enſe, as a nature, or eſſence, ſupreme, inviſible, ncorporeal, ineffable, incomprehenſible, &c. with-ut beginning or end, the firſt cauſe, and creator of ll things; the Heathens ſurely never had a notion f him.

Again. As all things are diſtinguiſhed by their ſſential properties, to know a thing muſt be to ave right apprehenſions of thoſe qualities, and at-ributes, which conſtitute that Identity, by which a hing is what it is, and not any thing elſe. But he peculiarity of the godhead, or what makes it ifferent from all other beings, is infinite perfection: o that to aſcribe the leaſt ſhadow of defect to him, t once deſtroys the cleareſt and moſt eſſential no-ion we can have of God.

If the Heathens believed him ſuch, they certain-y knew him; if they did not, they as certainly were ignorant of him. It is an old and true ma-xim, *Deum negaret, auferendo quod Dei eſt.* Tertul. dv. Marc. c. 3. to withdraw what belongs to God, s a denial of him, by making him ſomething dif-ferent from, inconſiſtent with, and contradictory to his real nature.

To conceive him what he is not, is to put an idol in his place. And it deſerves an harder name han ſhall be here given, to ſay, they knew the true God who repreſented him under characters, or at-ributes, which he has not, nor can have; or if he had them, could not be what he is.

Truth is but one; and he who makes the leaſt alteration therein, by endeavouring to add to, or diminiſh from it, turns it into falſhood. As God therefore is but one ſingle act, the ſame eternal, uncompounded principle, without any diſſimilar, or heterogeneous parts, and what we call the excellencies of his nature, are the nature itſelf: to miſrepreſent, or defalcate theſe, is to change it into a lie.

They who judge by this ſcriptural rule, muſt allow, that the Heathens, with reſpect to divine knowledge, ſat "in a land of darkneſs, as dark-
Job x. 22. "neſs itſelf, and of the ſhadow of death, without "any order, and where the light is as darkneſs." Their ignorance, falſhoods, and blaſphemies of the ſupreme being, need not be mention'd. Every one knows them; their defenders are aſhamed, and have no apology to offer. What a ſcale of diminution is
Rom. i. 22. Dr. *Clarke* forced to uſe? "men, ſays he, without the aſſiſtance of revelation, did not attain to a right "knowledge of God, in any conſiderable degree— "ſome argued themſelves out of the belief of the "very being of God—and in thoſe enquiries, "wherein they profeſſed themſelves to be moſt wiſe "they became fools."

To what lengths will a bad cauſe carry learned men? they knew God but not *rightly*, then *falſely* nor in any conſiderable degree, therefore not at all for he is not diſcoverable by ſcraps, or halves; they knew, what their own ratiocinations forced them to unknow, ſo far, as to diſbelieve his very exiſtence. And after profeſſedly laying out the whole effort of the human mind, to attain ſome wiſdom

in theſe ſublimer ſubjects, they remained errand fools; not knowing what, or why, they worſhipped. The upſhot is, that if they knew God, to know, and not to know, muſt be the ſame thing, at the ſame time, and in the ſame perſon.

Nor will it mend the matter, to glean a few detach'd ſentences, ſcatter'd up and down the ancient writings, how charming ſoever they may be, and then cry out, behold the ſtrength of reaſon! but let a philoſopher be named, even the divine *Plato*, who rightly judged, "that nothing ſhould be attri-"buted to God, that is not conſentaneous to his "nature." Repub. 2. p. 379. A. And if a thouſand glaring abſurdities, falſhoods, contradictions, and inconſiſtencies, are not to be found in him, (which *Cicero* ſaw, and lamented in his *Deus ille noſter*) the cauſe ſhall be given up. If they occur in every page, the few bright ſayings are no more than flaſhes of lightning, which may amaze, but not direct the benighted traveller: and only prove, that they had heard of ſubjects which they did not underſtand; and repeated a name, the true import of which they never knew.

It has alſo been ever acknowledged by Heathens, as well as Chriſtians, that men may as well have no God, as to entertain baſe unworthy conceptions of him. See Appendix, C. Yet by the tenour of the gentile catholick faith, he was looked on as a material, impotent, and polluted being.

The ſcriptures account for all this; that "the na-"tions had forgot God." Pſ. ix. 7. After which they never recovered the knowledge of him, "nor called up-"on his name." Pſ. lxxix. 6. "And when they knew not God, "they Gal. iv. 8.

" they did ſervice to them, which by nature are not
Deut. xxxii. 17. " Gods." For " they ſacrificed to devils, not to
1 Cor. x. 23. " God." So that except belief and diſbelief, knowledge and ignorance, truth and falſhood, have changed places, the Heathens were utter ſtrangers to the true Jehovah.

§ 16th. If we further conſider the real ſtrength of reaſon, and that great proficiency the ancient ſages made in ſubjects, where the mind had ſome ſure footing: what could prevent their making equal advancements, with certainty and truth, in divine knowledge, but that it is placed out of the depth
Job xxxvii. 23. of reaſon; and that, " touching the Almighty, we " cannot find him out?" Had it been poſſible, ſome imperious mind, during the long reign of philoſophy, with its force of genius, natural and acquired endowments, and unwearied diligence, in the purſuit of it, would have framed ſome rational conſiſtent ſcheme; but none did.

Socrates had doubts concerning his country gods, but there he ſtop'd; in life he conſtantly attended their altars and temples, and in death worſhipped them. *Porphyry*, " from the whole of their reli-
" gion, greatly feared, that their opinion of the
" deity was quite contrary to what it really is."
Epiſt. ad Aneb. and ſhall we judge of paganiſm from him, or any modern?

Again. Had they diſcovered the exiſtence of God with certainty, they muſt, by the ſame procedure and connexion of proofs, have clearly perceived, that indefectible holineſs, unerring juſtice, infinite power, and every other perfection of eſ-

ſence,

ſence, were inſeperable from that exiſtence. Then would the ſchools have argued in a ſimilar manner, concerning the firſt being; without thoſe fundamental differences, and eternal claſhings; which made *Cicero* look on their diſputes, as the dreams of madmen, rather than the judgments of philoſophers.

Here there is no medium. We muſt either ſay, the human mind was unequal to the taſk: or, there was not a man honeſt enough to declare truths of the greateſt importance to the world; but maliciouſly debaſed them, with foul and intolerable errors. Nor do they any honour to reaſon, who affirm ſhe could do, what ſhe never did; but it is juſtice to ſuppoſe her author never intended her for ſuch purpoſes.

In human philoſophy vaſt improvements are daily made; in the divine ſo little, that, ſince paradiſe was loſt, no wiſdom under the ſun, has been able to add one jota, in the diſcovery of another attribute, or a clearer manifeſtation of thoſe that were revealed, before reaſon could enter on the enquiry.

Nothing but conviction made *Grotius* ſay, "that "to affirm any thing more, for certain, than what "is delivered in holy ſcripture, either concerning "the nature of God, or his will, by the ſole guid-"ance of human reaſon, is moſt unſafe, and falli-"ble." De Ver. Chriſt. Relig. L. 3. c. 12.

§ 17th. There is ſtill another argument to be conſider'd, which natural religion moſt frequently appeals to, and ſeems to lay the greateſt ſtreſs upon, viz. that the human faculties, by contemplating

ting the works, may, and did, aſcend to a knowledge of the workman. But this will, on examination, appear to be falſe and groundleſs as the reſt, upon ſeveral accounts.

1ſt. The ſcriptures never urge the works, to prove the being of God, but his eternal power and godhead, when revealed: then, and not before, "the heavens declare the glory of God;" and as *Job* ſpeaks in the like ſenſe, "aſk now the beaſts, "and they ſhall tell thee. For by the greatneſs and "beauty of the creatures, proportionably the maker "of them is ſeen.

Job x. 7. Wiſdom xiii. 5.

2dly, They plainly teach us, "that thro' faith "we underſtand that the worlds were framed by the "word of God; ſo that things which are ſeen, "were not made of things which do appear." Creation, or producing ſomething out of nothing; and innumerable beings, at a word, let it be ſo, ſtarting out of non-entity, is no object of reaſon, but of faith. Here again all things are infinite; and and he who can clearly diſcover the contrivances of omniſcience, may alſo perform the works of omnipotence. The very *hearing* of creation, is by the word of God.

Heb. xi. 3.

3dly, The creatures were ſo far from leading to the creator, that they were the cauſe of the firſt and moſt univerſal idolatry, when the world forſook and denied him. The name of God remained, with an opinion of ſome ſuperior excellencies belonging to it; but the nature ſo totally forgot, that they arbitrarily annexed the name to the moſt glorious of viſible objects, the univerſe, the ſun, moon, and ſtars, which they accordingly fell down to, and worſhipped, as Gods.

The

They alſo deified the worſt and wickedeſt of men; but ſuch as, from their atchievements, they look'd upon above the common rank of mortals; the founders of kingdoms and cities, the inventors of arts and ſciences, or the benefactors of mankind. The former continued to be the Gods of philoſophers, the latter of the commonalty, during the life of paganiſm.

4thly, The very act of creation was looked upon as a thing ſo incredible and impoſſible, as to become "the common opinion of all naturaliſts, that "nothing can be made out of nothing.*" Therefore univerſally held matter to be a ſelf-exiſting principle, co-eternal with God, and that its pre-exiſtence was abſolutely neceſſary to the production of things. Accordingly, *Jehovah* is thro' the old teſtament, diſtinguiſhed from falſe Gods, by the maker of heaven and earth. And in the new teſtament, the apoſtles begin their inſtruction of the Gentiles (not the Jews, who ever believ'd it) with that diſtinguiſhing attribute, they were entirely ignorant of, the living God who made heaven and earth, and all things therein †.

Omni-

* *Ariſtot.* Phyſ. 1, 4, 8.

† *Anaxagoras* held two eternal principles. *Plato* made his maſter's hypotheſis worſe, by adding a third. And *Ariſtotle* denied both, as having no reaſon to ſupport them, and held the world to be eternal. *Plato* indeed (in his *Timæus*) calls God Δημιουργὸς πατὴρ τε, the framer and father of the leſſer Gods. But profeſſes to have received it from ancient original tradition; and does not infer more, than that will warrant; at the ſame time ſteadily holding the eternity of matter and motion---*Galen* ſays, the opinion of *Moſes* is quite different from mine, and *Plato*'s, and all other *Greeks* who have wrote judiciouſly concerning nature. De part. in corp. hum. us. Orat. 9. c. 13. *Simplicius*,

Omnipotence is an eſſential attribute of God. That power which reacheth to the utmoſt poſſibility of things, or, to whatever is not contrary to the divine nature, or does not imply a contradiction, which are no objects of power. This every Heathen denied to God. And all his ways and workmanſhip being unſearchable by man; he, for the manifeſtation of his own glory, revealed, and recorded by *Moſes*, what only could be known to himſelf; the act, and order, of creation.

It muſt then inconteſtably follow, that no contemplation of the viſible works, could lead thoſe up to an inviſible creator, who believed a creation utterly impoſſible. Conſequently, no relations or fitneſs of things cuuld be a ſufficient direction to the world, whilſt ignorant of the neareſt relation man can ſtand in to God, that of a creature to its creator. And the foundation being thus apparently falſe, the whole pompous fabric built thereon, falls to the ground.

Nor were any fitneſſes deducible from an agent, who could not work without matter prepared to his hand, as wanting the perfections of a ſupreme being. And for moderns to infer them, from an act of infinite liberty and freedom, is, at beſt, an unwarrantable preſumption. For man who has no

plicius, if he [*Moſes*] thinks this to have been the firſt generation, and beginning of time, it is a fabulous narration. Com. in *Ariſt*, Phyſ. L. 8, p. 268. *Celſus* derides the moſaic hiſtory of creation, as an incredible unphiloſophical tale. Orig. cont. Celſ. L. 4. p. 186. And *Longinus* § 7. tho' he admired the grandeur, wherewith *Moſes* deſcribed the creation, looked upon it as an high ſtrain of rhetorick, rather than a proper expreſſion of that incomprehenſible efficacy, which attends the divine will and decree. See Appendix D.

know-

knowledge, or distinct apprehension of the essence, form, or constitution of things, which lie on the surface, to unfold, and argue from the whole connexion of them. Because, in the will and works of God, every thing is impenetrable, further than he declares them; except therefore a man can comprehend all the ways, which infinite wisdom hath of knowing things, and infinite power of doing things; how they were at first contrived, and by what means they now fulfil their destin'd agency; it will be ever impossible to deduce from them, a compleat and undoubted rule of life.

Nor is it needful; God no where requires it, but has given another method of instruction. And could he deceive us in his word, he might also by his works, and man be subjected to perpetual delusion. The word, and works, are equally from him, as creator, and law-giver: he established the course of things, and order of nature, but gave them not as a law to us. That is, to love him, and keep his commandments, which are to be learned from his revealed word, not from the bible of the world.

Mr. *Locke* however has the easy method, by a Pythagorean *ipse dixit*, of sliding over, aud solving matters, which do not square with his essay. The real essence of all things is, with him, far beyond our discovery or apprehension. L. 3. c. 6. § 9. Yet men have faculties, to discover enough in the creatures, to lead them to a knowledge of their creator, and their duty. L. 2. c. 23. § 12. L. 4. c. 12. § 11. That is, men know nothing really, of matter the nearest to them; yet by that knowledge of nothing,

know enough, to diſcover a ſpiritual infinite, re-
moved at the moſt inconceivable diſtance from them.
They are not fitted for the leaſt, yet are equal to the
greateſt taſk.

Mr. *Locke* indeed ſays this, but never attempts to
prove it, except by ſcriptural arguments, which he
uſes, when profeſſedly treating of this ſubject. L. 4.
c. 10, &c. And he certainly included himſelf, under
his general rule; that moderns no way excel the
ancients in ſtrength of reaſon; and whatever they
ſay better, is from a light the others never had. His
bare aſſertion therefore, can be looked upon as no
more, than, what he elſewhere calls, "a confuſed
"notion, taken up to ſerve an hypotheſis."

And he certainly was as good a philoſopher, who
Wiſd. xiii. 1. teaches, that "ſurely vain are all men by nature
"who are ignorant of God, and could not out of
"the good things that are ſeen, know him that is;
"neither by conſidering the works, did they ac-
"knowledge the work-maſter."

§ 18th. So much has been ſaid of the knowledge
of God, which is the foundation of all religion, that
little need be added on other ſubjects. A RESUR-
RECTION, and the ſouls IMMORTALITY, are the
ground work of all reaſonings about futurity; and
if not clearly diſcoverable, natural law is of little
worth; it being an eternity to come, that makes re-
ligion ſo awful, and its motives ſo powerful.

As to a RESURRECTION, it was ever looked up-
on as an article, incredible, and impoſſible. The
Stoics, and Epicureans had never heard of ſo ſtrange
Acts xvii. a doctrine, and deſpiſed it. *Pliny* ſays, God ca-

ot do all things, neither recall the dead, nor make nortal creatures, immortal. N. H. L. 2. c. 7. And *Celſus* brands it, as the hope of worms, a filthy, bominable, impoſſible thing, what God neither will, nor can do. Orig. cont. Celſ. L. 5. p. 240.

Of the ſoul's IMMORTALITY, it may ſuffice to ay; that as the divine power, and goodneſs, are he only ſtability of things, by which all created be-ngs are brought into exiſtence, and enjoy a con-inuance of it: ſo, whether they ſhall be annihila-ed, or have a permanence thro' all eternity, de-ends wholly on the will of God; and what he will do, cannot be learned but from revelation; no principle being clearer than this, that whatever had beginning, may alſo have an end; that it ſhall ot, muſt reſt on the divine teſtimony.

For had the ſoul a natural immortality, the ori-in of life in itſelf, it could never ceaſe to be, but would be God. If its immortality be only poſi-ive, it is a ſpecial act of the creator; and what infinite liberty did, or would do, could only be de-lared by him.

But as all things beyond the grave, are, to na-ure, a land of darkneſs; the beſt arguments it could ffer, were falſe, and inconcluſive. There never as agreement, becauſe no certainty. Some doubted, thers denied, not one had an aſſurance of it. Whence all their diſputes ended in nothing but ords, and empty contentions. All they could ffer was, ſays *Grotius*, *conjecturæ*, *incertæ*, *vagæ*, *ragiles*, doubtful, vague, and weak conjectures. Epheſ. ii. 12.

Immortality was an hearſay; which pleaſed ſome, onvinced none. If the ſoul ſurvives, well! if not,

no evil will enſue; was the utmoſt limit of human underſtandings. See Appendix E.

Of a FUTURE STATE, whoſe extremes of happineſs or miſery ſo cloſely bind the ſoul of man, their opinions were equally wavering and contradictory; ſome broken remains of antiquity carried down the river of time, ſadly defaced, and ridiculouſly diſguiſed; but what none could rectify. Yet, ſays Bp. *Wilkins*, Nat. R. L. 1. c. 11. "what bears, "and wolves, and devils, would men prove to one "another, without the belief of rewards and pu- "niſhments in another life?" true; but were they not looked upon as children's tales, without influence or regard? Theſe things are only knowable by revelation; to that are owing humanity and civility, as well as reaſon and religion. And becauſe the voice of it, was but little heard, or not at all, by ſo many nations, ever was the true cauſe, and ſtill is, of their being wolves and devils.

Yet theſe articles were ſteadily believed by the Hebrews. *Martha* knew her brother ſhould riſe again in the reſurrection at the laſt day. It was the hope of *Iſrael*, and the promiſe of God made unto the fathers. A future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments was alſo ſo clearly revealed in the writings of *Moſes* and the prophets, that he who hearkned not to them, would not be perſuaded tho' one roſe from the dead, and atteſted the reality of it.

The ſame will hold good of every other article. Some light ſhone forth in darkneſs, amidſt the FEW who travell'd to glean up knowledge. But all primæval truths became ſo miſerably altered, that little

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more than their names remained. And of theſe, natural religion ſhall have the full benefit, in the manner, and meaſure, they were taught by the wiſeſt ſchools.

As to their MORALS, they were of neceſſity looſe and inconſiſtent, having no rule to try them by, or principles to deduce them from. It is agreed, that there can be no morality, except there be a God, whoſe nature is the firſt and great exemplar of it. Therefore, what mens notions of God are, ſuch will be their morals; if one be groſs, imperfect, and falſe; ſo muſt be the other. The propoſitions are convertible; tell us your Gods, and we will tell what your morals are: tell us your morals, and we will tell what are your Gods. All were alike bad, their Gods were vanities, their worſhip accurſed, and their morals the ſhame of reaſon, and the ſtain of nature.

§ 19th. But it will be aſk'd, how then can we account for what knowledge, be it more or leſs, the Gentiles had, and whence was it derived? the anſwer is, from TRADITION; as may appear by ſeveral conſiderations.

1ſt. Nature being the ſame in all, take revelation away, and mankind muſt have been under an univerſal light, or total darkneſs; there being little difference, but what inſtruction makes. This ceaſed, as men diſperſed, and reports became daily more uncertain; like the faint twilight on the horizon, when the ſun is ſet, which gives ſome notices, but very imperfect ones, of diſtant objects: where that

was

was quite extinguiſh'd, it was darkneſs, as the ſhadow of death. This our excellent *Hooker* confirms (Ec. Pol. L. 1. § 13.) "To judge what hazard "truth is in, when it paſſeth thro' the hands of "report, we need only conſider the *little* of things "divine, which the Heathens have in ſuch ſort re-"ceived." For truth never changes, but for the worſe.

2dly, The very obſcurity of things is a proof of ſuch conveyance: as truth muſt be before error, which is only a corruption of it. Original falſhood is a contradiction, and impoſſible. An inſtance of this we have in the name of God (to which ſome ſupremacy and worſhip will be annexed) his proper appellation *Jehovah* remained, but turned into a lie, and called *Jove*; not denoting any truly divine being, but matter, or man, or what every one pleaſed; for the world had 300 *Jupiter* gods, that *Euripides* might well ſay, who *Jupiter* is, I know nothing, but what fame reports. *Menalip.* v. 2.

The ſame rule will hold good in all caſes; if there had not been once a true religion, we could never have heard of bad ones: every mode of Gentile worſhip was ſome divine inſtitution perverted. This manifeſts the certainty of a revelation, and the weakneſs of reaſon, which was ſo far from diſcovering new truths, that it could not retain the old ones it had learned. And that theſe were no congenite notions, appears, from its never recovering them, when once loſt, but by freſh inſtruction.

3dly, According to the difference of purity wherewith original traditions were conveyed to different people, aroſe the ſtrict obſervance of particu-

lar duties in ſome places, which, in others, were totally neglected. So far conſcience went, and *thoughts accuſed or excuſed them*; but no further than informed. Where ignorance was invincible, there could be no law to oblige, nor rule to act by; therefore *God winked at it*, paſſed it by, without charging it to their condemnation. But had they ſufficient light by nature, and that were the appointed means, to know their duty and their God; there could have been no room for ſuch mercy: or, the condition of Heathens, was far better than that of Jews, or Chriſtians.

4thly, If the world had various doctrines, and ſpeculations about things, confeſſedly above the ſphere of reaſon; as of leſſer Gods or angels, the origin of the univerſe, the primæval ſtate, the corruption of man, the entrance of ſin, mediators, atonement, and the like: it has the ſtricteſt force of demonſtration, that they were once revealed; and the deformed manner in which the Heathens taught them, was a debaſement of their priſtine beauty.

The vaſt length of time, alſo, thro' which many traditions have been conveyed, and do ſtill ſubſiſt, amongſt diſtant and even barbarous nations, of which inſtances may be given amongſt every known people under heaven; abundantly confirms the obſervation already made, that there could be no age, which did not receive benefit from revelation.

Nor can we here omit a noble teſtimony of the patriarchal ſeats being where *Moſes* placed them; from which fountains all the ſtreams of knowledge flowed: that as *Greece* derived its ſacred doctrines

and traditions from the eaſt; the *Chineſe* do it from the weſt. *Du Halde*, tom. 3. p. 313.

5thly, There can be no point in philoſophy more undeniable than this; that whatever knowledge men diſcover by a rational procedure, they are able to prove, or ſhew by what train of reaſoning they made out the deduction. Yet the Heathens never could do this, in any divine article. Some argued better than others; but not a ſingle tenet was ever demonſtrated from right principles, by proper mediums; ſo that it could not be their own invention. *Ariſtotle* therefore rejected his maſter's ſublimer doctrines, becauſe no rational account could be given of them.

Plato however is very ingenuous, profeſſing he did not come at them, by his own diſcovery, but from hearſay; and frankly tells, where, and from whom, he received each article: "yet verily be-"lieved them to be true." *Gorgias*, p. 524. A. He juſtly calls them, *Syrian* and *Phænician* fables, or traditions, but ineffable, as containing myſteries above his comprehenſion. And derives the very exiſtence of the Gods, from their own information. *Philebus*, p. 16. C. His example alone ſufficiently demonſtrates, that no man can go further in ſupernatural truths, than he has a borrowed light to direct him. And ſuch was the confeſſion of every philoſopher.

6thly, This method of conveyance, is acknowledged by their moſt learned defenders, as the only one they had of coming at theſe ſpeculations. *Grotius* calls the ſurvivance of ſouls, a moſt ancient tradition, derived from our firſt parents. Whence elſe

lfe, ſays he, ſhould it come to almoſt all civilized ations? *De Ver. Chriſt. Relig.* L. 1. § 32—Biſhop *umberland.* The tradition of one God, greater han the reſt; the ſoul's immortality, &c. were de-ived from the common fountain of mankind, the ons of *Noah. Orig. Antiquiſ.* p. 451.—Bp. *Burnet,* rom the univerſal belief of a God, infers, that ei-her there is ſomewhat in the nature of man, that, y a ſecret ſort of inſtinct, dictates this to him;—r, that this belief has paſſed down from the firſt an to all his poſterity, in *Art.* 1.—Dr. *Whitby.* hat the weak and imperfect knowledge the Hea-hens had of a future judgment, was preſerved to hem by tradition. *Attributes,* V. 2. p. 69, 93.—r. *Clarke,* of the ſoul's immortality; that it was ceived from a tradition, ſo ancient, and ſo univer-l, as cannot be conceived to owe its original, either chance, or to vain imagination, or to any other uſe, than to the author of nature himſelf. *Boyle,* ect. pt. 2. Prop. 4. And ſuch is the language of moſt every writer who treats of this ſubject.

§ 20th. This enquiry into the means of attain-g knowledge, grounded on the true plan of na-re, the authority of ſcripture, the experience of l ages, and the confeſſion of the wiſeſt Heathens d Chriſtians; ſhews that, in whatever light we ace things, an infant mind wants nurture, as well an infant body; which nothing, but inſtruction, d that originally from God, can ſupply. Our verſaries are therefore again called upon, to ſhew, en, where, and by whom, a right belief of the e God, and the duties owing to him, were clear-

ly and univerſally maintained, prior to, and without any benefit from revelation: or with it, out of the pale of jewry.

If the world ever was without the name of God, to which ſome ſenſe of religion muſt be annexed; let them prove it: or tell us, how men could be ſaid to find out, what they learned from their fathers? and if the wiſer Heathens diſclaimed their coming at ſuch knowledge, by any uſe of their faculties; whether to affirm, what they deny of themſelves, be not arrogance, and falſhood.

Or were an univerſal rule of acting imprinted on nature, interwoven with our very beings, every one muſt be as conſcious of it, as of his own exiſtence; and, as ſoon forget, to ſee, or hear, or walk, as theſe ſelf-evident truths, congenite with, ſpontaneouſly ſpringing up, and cut deep, in the heart: ſuch objections as theſe, are ſlided over, never anſwered. Let one city, or one man, be produced as an example, of knowing, or believing theſe things.

And if the *few* adulterated their choiceſt doctrines, with monſtrous abſurdities; to depend on reaſon for a guide, affords little honour to God, or comfort to man; of what uſe is a law in the mind, which no one perceived, and every one corrupted. Let it alſo be reconciled, how mankind ſhould be able to diſcover the perfect will of God; yet, when diſcovered, totally unable to obſerve it, in faith or practice.

But if we take inſtruction along with us, it is a teacher that will direct us thro' all the obſcurity and maze of things, ſolve every difficulty, lead up truth to the fountain head, and explain the mighty

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difference in wiſdom, between ages, and nations: that as marble in the block is capable of any form; ſo is the human mind deformed, or beautiful, according to the ſkill of him who models, and poliſhes it.

WHAT good cauſe then can be aſſigned, for reaſon being thus ſet up againſt revelation, except the pride of man, who would not willingly be a debtor to any but himſelf? the revealed Word of God is a compleat law of all things required of him to *believe*, or *do*, towards the perfection of his nature. And whether his commands relate to practice or ſpeculation, the authority of all is equally from him; but with this difference, that to the former, he demands the obedience of our will; to the latter, only the aſſent of our underſtanding.

Yet, tho' his precepts are moſt excellent, agreeable to the pureſt dictates of reaſon, and the higheſt expectations of the ſoul; men will not aſcribe the glory of them to God, but themſelves; and by thus taking off their obligation, become their own lords, and maſters.

On the ſame account, they reject all myſteries, becauſe there can be no ſecret counſel in God, which they are not able fully to underſtand and comprehend; tho' the only faith required of us, is to believe the reality of ſome thiugs, upon the credit of a divine teſtimony; not the manner how they do exiſt, which is neither revealed, nor required of us to know. And if men are not ſo wiſe as God, infidelity in theſe caſes, muſt be owing to great pride or perverſeneſs. Tho' one ſhort rule may ſerve to direct us, in conſidering both the word and

works of God. That it matters not, what we (ignorant of the internal frame of all things) can conceive, or do; but what infinite power can do, and what infinite truth declares he has done, can, or will do. This no one denies of God, but that he may be a God to himſelf. Or for man to complain, that he cannot do, or know more, than his preſent faculties are able; is to complain of God that he did not make him an angel, or ſome different being, with larger capacities, from what he is.

And, for what is it men would exchange the word of God? for a law, which has no certainty or obligation, no exiſtence, no mark of truth or religion in it; of ſo little uſe to the great purpoſes of man, that it never did afford an univerſal rule to direct him in the way to happineſs? what then could the fruits of it be, but to live in ignorance, and lie down in miſery?

Even to read Dr. *Clarke*'s *unchangeable obligations of natural religion*, ſeems ſufficient to make a thinking chriſtian renounce, and abjure it. V. 2. Prop. 6. "That the beſt of the philoſophers had no "knowledge of the order and method of God's "governing the world—That their natural under-"ſtanding was as unqualified, to find out and ap-"prehend, the moſt obvious neceſſary truths, as "the eyes of bats to behold the light of the ſun—"even the nature and attributes of God himſelf—"As to the *manner* in which God would be wor-"ſhipped, they were entirely and unavoidably ig-"norant—In all important doctrines, as the ſouls "immortality, and certainty of a future ſtate, they "were very doubtful, and uncertain—Nor were

"ever

" ever able, fully to explain, or prove, the neceſ-
" ſary indiſpenſable obligations of morality---They
" perpetually diſagreed, and contradicted one ano-
" ther, concerning the chief good, and final hap-
" pineſs of man----and ſeveral other very neceſſary
" truths, not poſſible to be diſcovered, with any
" certainty, by the bare light of nature----Or,
" were it poſſible, 'tis certain in *fact*, the wiſeſt
" philoſophers of old never did it----So that there
" was plainly wanting, ſome extraordinary, and
" ſupernatural aſſiſtance; which was above the
" reach of bare reaſon and philoſophy to procure----
" And the very heathens were perſuaded, that
" the great rules of human life muſt receive their
" authority from heaven----For revelation has a
" greater, and more influence, upon the lives and
" actions of men, than the reaſonings of all the
" philoſophers."

Of what neceſſity or uſe then is a religion, that thus vaniſhes in a miſt? Nor is it only a deceiver, in pretending to things it never did; but a felon, in robbing revelation of invaluable truths, and then claiming them as its own. " For almoſt all the " things, that are ſaid wiſely and truely by mo-" dern deiſts [and pray what is Dr. *Clarke?*] are " plainly borrowed from that revelation, which they " refuſe to embrace, and without which, they never " could have been able to have ſaid the ſame things---" 'Tis *one thing* to ſee, that theſe rules of life, when " plainly laid before us, are perfectly agreeable to " reaſon; and *another thing*, to find out theſe rules, " merely by the light of reaſon." Dr. *Clarke*, ib. prop. 7.

So

So Mr. *Locke*, and others. "It ſhould ſeem, "ſays he, by the little that has been hitherto done, "that 'tis too hard a thing for unaſſiſted reaſon, "to eſtabliſh morality, in all its parts, upon its "true foundation----it ever failed men, in this, "its great and proper buſineſs----And if the chri- "ſtian philoſophers have ſo much outdone the "heathen, yet we may obſerve, that the firſt know- "ledge of the truths they have added, was owing "to revelation." With much more to the ſame purpoſe. Reaſon. of Chriſt. p. 268, &c.

HERE then let us ſtop, and conſider; if there are but two ways of coming at, whatever deſerves the name of, wiſdom or underſtanding; either by reaſon or revelation: one, a glimering, falſe, deceitful taper, that always bewildered its followers, in ignorance and error: the other, a clear, perfect, and refulgent light, ever ſhining forth unto perfect day, by which no one ever walked, and was deceived. What difficulty can there be in our choice?

Who would change his bible (by which a villager knows more, than all the ſchools of *Athens* or *Rome*) for a metaphyſical cobweb, an inconſiſtent jargon of unmeaning terms, which can render a man neither wiſer nor better? or leave truths of his great concernments, to tedious intricate deductions which, few or none are able to judge of; when he has in his hands, ſo ſhort, and ſure a method, of coming at them, as the infallible rule of his almighty law-giver?

If redemption and faith, repentance and ſalvation are articles of our creed, and no parts of natural religion; what ſhould we ſtudy, but the words of eterna

eternal life; or whither go for learning, but to that ſchool, where ſuch divine ſubjects are taught, as none but God could declare; and confirmed by ſuch unqueſtionable evidences, as prophecies and miracles, which none but God could bring? nor is the time yet come, or ever will; when his revealed word ſhall not be as neceſſary for the direction of man, as his providence to govern the world.

To CONCLUDE. From the foregoing enquiry, we may perceive the error, of ſeveral opinions, advanced by great names amongſt us, in ſupport of natural religion. One is, that God never gave a law to mankind, before the days of *Moſes*; and thence, in all their diſcourſes, confound the patriarchal and moſaical law together, tho' moſt eſſentially different in their origin, obligation, univerſality, and continuance. Another, equally falſe and dangerous, is, that a general declaration of God's will was never made to the world, before the preaching of the goſpel.

But of all the aſſertions inculcated by moderns, the moſt deteſtable is; that the only intent of revealed religion, was to revive, and improve, the natural notions we have of God: and that revelation cannot ſubſiſt, without pre-ſuppoſing a natural religion. Whereas it appears undeniably, that revelation was from the beginning; and that, without it, there could not have been, any duty, law, or religion in the world. Let us then "hold faſt that form of ſound words; and beware leaſt any man ſpoil us, through philoſophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not of Chriſt."

For

For as the whole ſcheme of creation and redemption, was laid in the mind eternal: ſo ſince the fall, there has been but one covenant, the everlaſting goſpel of good tydings; but one mediator, whoſe prieſthood is unchangeable; one faith, by which we can be ſaved; one hope of eternal life, and threat of endleſs death, to every one that cometh into the world.

Here then (but, as it ought, in ſo ſolemn a caſe, from a thorough and long conviction; nor from any other motive, would urge others to do the ſame) I fix the rule of my faith, the law of my being, and the hopes of my ſalvation; that religion entered the world by revelation: and that, becauſe no other ſyſtem, can give certainty, authority, and obligation to it; can neither ſatisfy the judgment, nor bind the conſcience. And if this principle be true, without any thing here advanced in ſupport of it, but what is warranted by ſcripture; diſpute is at an end. Whatever the Atheiſt or Deiſt object: whatever foundation of ſtubble or ſtraw, others would lay, in reaſon or nature, can be no more than cavil, or ſuppoſition.

In the bible alone, is man's preſent duty, and final end propounded. And thence it appears, that a perfect rule, and fixed meaſure of duty, binding at all times and places, without ſtanding in need of any addition or alteration, was given at the beginning, and ſhall endure thro' all generations; who are but one family, in one ſpirit, one Saviour, one God and Father of all.

To whom, &c.

APPEN-

APPENDIX.

AS ſome points might ſeem to want further explanation, and others to be confirmed by the opinion of the moſt competent judges; it was thought proper to add them by way of appendix.

A. p. 15. It is undoubtedly a taſk of utmoſt danger, to diſſent from Mr. *Locke*'s eſſay: yet whilſt it the ſtandard of mens reaſonings, and judging of ings; if any fundamental errors be contained erein, they muſt unavoidably lead into miſtakes the moſt pernicious nature. To examine matrs of ſuch conſequence is every one's duty and inreſt; with which view, I beſeech every ſerious quirer after truth, to conſider, whether our great thor, whilſt he rooted up innate ideas, did not, his own hypotheſis, open a gap to far greater evils. hether indeed his whole plan be not contradictory, lſe, uncertain, and inconſiſtent with religion. At ſt, ſhall offer a few obſervations, why it appears me in that light.

1ſt. The grand principle on which his fabrick reſts, is, " that ideas of ſenſation and reflection are " the original of all knowledge." The rule is general; no exception can be made: for " all thoſe " ſublime thoughts, which tower above the clouds, " and reach as high as heaven itſelf, take their riſe " and footing here: in all the great extent, where- " in the mind wanders, in thoſe remote ſpeculati- " ons, it may ſeem to be elevated with, it ſtirs not " one jot beyond theſe ideas." L. 2. c. 1. § 24.

To paſs over ideas of reflection, which biſhop *Brown* (in his limits of the human underſtanding) has proved undeniably to be a contradiction in terms: it muſt be here obſerved, that the frequent retractions from his main principle, every where to be met with, were not intended to invalidate it, nor are ſo taken by his followers. The general maxim is inviolable, " that we want knowledge of all ſorts, " where we want ideas."

Now if the mind be acquainted with numberleſs truths, the knowledge of which (by Mr. *Locke's* own confeſſion, and an impoſſibility ariſing from the nature of things) it did not come at, by ideas of ſenſation and reflection; there can want no farther proof, of the eſſay's being laid in falſhood and contradiction.

Our philoſopher then tells us in general, tha " in the works of God there are more, and mor " beautiful beings, whereof we have no ideas, tha " there are, whereof we have ideas." 2d. Reply t the Biſhop of *Worceſter*, p. 537. *Dublin* Edit. C which beings, whereof we have no ideas, a man capable of knowing their exiſtence to be real an tru

true, " becauſe he is capable of having it revealed " to him by God." Ib. which ſurely, as he ſeems immediately after to apprehend, is inconſiſtent with " his own way of certainty."

He again thus diſtinguiſhes things; " by reaſon " God communicates to mankind, that portion of " truth, which he has laid within the reach of our " natural faculties---Revelation is natural reaſon " enlarged, by a new ſet of diſcoveries, commu- " nicated by God immediately." L 4. c. 19. § 4. Conſequently, there are truths, and knowledge, of quite a different kind, and *Origen*, from thoſe ſuppoſed to be attainable from ideas of ſenſation and reflection.

" For there are propoſitions above reaſon." Ib. c. 17. § 23.—" Many things, wherein we have very " imperfect notions, or none at all; and other " things, of whoſe paſt, preſent, or future exi- " ſtence, by the natural uſe of our faculties, we " have no knowledge at all. Theſe as being be- " yond the diſcovery of our natural faculties, and " above reaſon, are, when revealed, the proper " matter of faith." Ib. c. 18. § 7.—" The ex- " iſtence of ſpirits is not knowable, but by revela- " tion." Ib. c. 11. § 12.—" And concerning the " exiſtence of ſeveral other things we muſt content " ourſelves with the evidence of faith." Ib.—" For " in all ſupernatural truths, the evidence of reaſon " fails." 2d. Rep. to Bp. of *W.* p. 597.—" We " receive the chriſtian religion from revelation, " whereby God himſelf affords light and know- " ledge immediately to us, and we ſee the truth of " what he ſays, in his unerring veracity." Ib. c. 7.

§ 11.—" For revelation, having the teſtimony of " God, is certainty beyond doubt, evidence beyond " exception, and our aſſent to it, or faith, has as " much certainty, as our knowledge itſelf." Ib. c. 16. § 14.

Is it not then clear as the ſun, that tho' ſome truths are laid within our reach, " of which the " mind can determine, and judge, by the uſe of its " natural faculties, from naturally acquired ideas." Ib. c. 18. § 9. Yet there are numberleſs others, of far greater dignity and importance, which lie beyond the ſphere of reaſon; as all ſupernatural, ſpiritual, and inviſible beings, or objects, which are diſcoveries immediately from God. For " whatever " propoſition is revealed, of whoſe truth, our " mind, by its natural faculties and notions, can- " not judge, that is purely matter of faith, and " above reaſon." Ib. Then, revelation is the principle of truth, and ground of aſſent.

So that here is a vaſt ſtock of ſublime knowledge, all indeed deſerving that name, which does not take its riſe from, or has the leaſt connection with ideas of ſenſation and reflexion. Nay the point contended for undeniably follows Mr. *Locke*'s own poſitions; that whenever religion entered the world, it muſt have been by revelation, or *communicated by God immediately*; which is incompatible with ideas of ſenſation.

2dly, There ariſes from the very nature of things, an impoſſibility of their being, in general, ſubject to Mr. *Locke*'s ſyſtem of ideal knowledge. If we conſider the utmoſt extent of the mind, all things conceivable by it, may be reduced under two claſſes, viſible

viſible and inviſible, material and immaterial. There is no medium. Nor can it think or judge of them, without ſome mark or repreſentation before it; and in proportion as theſe are clear or confuſed, ſuch will be its perception of them.

Of the former ſpecies, it has an exact image, conformable to the exiſtence of things, which may be properly called an IDEA. This is what he ſays; "of a figure we clearly ſee, and a ſound we diſtinct-"ly hear, we have ideas by ſenſation or reflexion." Let. to Bp. of *W.* p. 370.

But what has this to do with the other claſs of things, "which eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard?" yet by his own rule we have a knowledge of? here, we have no true picture, or repreſentation in the mind, but only ſome feint notices, received by inſtruction, and analogy, or comparing things unknown, with thoſe that are known. We ſee them, but "as thro' a glaſs darkly," ἐν αἰνίγματι, obſcurely, at a diſtance; ſo as to have a glimpſe of them, by likeneſs or ſimilitude; not a clear viſion of the objects themſelves. And theſe, in diſtinction to ideas, may be called NOTIONS, as "being quite "removed from ſenſe." L. 3. c. 1. § 5. For they are conveyed by language to the intellect, where words are the ſubſtitutions or ſigns of them. 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

Nor are things themſelves more eſſentially different, than their conveyances to, or repreſentations in the mind, for objects of thought. Language cannot convey original direct ideas of ſenſe, nor ideas of ſenſe intellectual notions. So neither can we have an idea of ſpirit, or a notion of what we diſtinctly ſee. And it is as poſſible for the mind to

create

create an object of ſenſe, as a notion of inviſibilities, without information.

On which accounts, Mr. *Locke*'s grand principle is falſe, contrary to, and inconſiſtent with, the nature, and eſſential difference of things.

3dly, This hypotheſis is uncertain, and of the moſt pernicious conſequence to all religious truths.

It appears, that the mind cannot contemplate things, in their abſence, but by ſome repreſentations of them; nor otherwiſe, than as they are true or falſe. For "as truth, in its proper import, ſig-"nifies nothing, but the joining or ſeparating of "ſigns, as the things ſignified by them, do agree "or diſagree with one another." L. 4. c. 5. § 2. It muſt follow, that the placing ſigns to repreſent things, which they cannot poſſibly ſignify, will produce great uncertainty and error, both in philoſophy and divinity; by confounding all real truths as they exiſt in nature. Thus, by placing the ſame mark for viſibles and inviſibles, reduces both claſſes into that, whereof the mark is a proper ſubſtitute, and the mind muſt think and reaſon upon them accordingly.

"For knowledge is the perception of the agree-"ment or diſagreement of any of our ideas." L. 4. c. 1. § 2. And if things be diverſe, ſo muſt the memorials of them; or the mind, in thinking, could not diſtinguiſh one from the other. For where there is no difference, things will appear the ſame; it cannot join or ſeparate ſigns, conſequently neither attain truth or knowledge.

Now, as the greateſt "abuſe of words, is the ſet-"ting them in the place of things, which they do

"o

" or can, by no means ſignify." L. 2. c. 10. § 17. It may juſtly be apprehended, that from our great author's uſing the term IDEA, in ſo equivocal, and undetermined a manner; " as the idea of God, the " idea of an infinite ſupreme being." L. 4. c. 3. § 18. and the like; as well as of the neareſt, and moſt contemptible objects; greater miſchiefs have ariſen, than from all the writings, of the profeſſed enemies to religion. He conſtantly aſſerts, " an idea to " be whatever is the object of the underſtanding, " when a man thinks." L. c. 1. § 8.—" For we " cannot reaſon without thinking, or think without " immediate objects of the mind in thinking, that " is, without ideas." 2d Reply to Bp. of *W.* 473, 536, 537.—" So that where we have no ideas, our " reaſoning ſtops, and we are at an end of our " reckoning." L. 4. c. 17. § 9.

Not only of our reaſon, but of our religion alſo, and every thing that is inviſible and divine, whereof we can have no ideas.

Again. The recapitulation of all is. " Where- " ever we are ſure, our ideas agree with the reality " of things, there is certain real knowledge." L. 4. c. 4. § ib. So on the contrary, without ſuch aſſu- rance, we can have no certainty. Whence it follows, that as we cannot be ſure that our moſt exalted noti- ons, do agree with the archetypes of ſpiritual hea- venly objects, we can have no real certain know- ledge of them.

The conſequences which have followed this looſe method of teaching the doctrine of ideas, are many, and fatal.—Hence, younger minds have contracted ſuch prejudices againſt religious truths, as are not,

without

without great difficulty to be removed—Upon this, our latter infidels have grounded all their cavils, or pretended reaſonings, againſt revelation—It is ſo fundamental a point in hereſy, that ſome, in the preface to their little eſſays, have reminded us of it: that we might never looſe ſight of this firſt ſelf-evident principle, that ideas of ſenſation and reflection are the original of all knowledge.

It is from the reduction of things eſſentially different to the ſame claſs, and making ideas, the univerſal repreſentatives of them, that every freethinker inſolently aſſumes the liberty, of affirming and denying the ſame thing of all ſubjects, however oppoſite, in the ſame literal manner, as if they were of the ſame kind; and confidently demands the ſame proof, for every branch of knowledge, whether human or divine: tho' it be as abſurd and contradictory, as to make one ſenſe judge of objects peculiar to another; the ear of colours, or the eye of ſounds. And becauſe they have no direct ſenſible ideas of ſupernatural truths, cannot comprehend, therefore will not believe them.

This ſophiſm is the corner-ſtone of anti-revelationiſts under all their ſerpentine maſks and diſguiſes; to require the evidence of ſenſe, for what is not cognizable by ſenſe. They cannot endure the name of myſtery, or that there ſhould be any thing ſo tranſcendent, in the divine nature and exiſtence, as paternity, filiation, and the like; or any decree or effect in the ſecret counſel of God, for the redemption of mankind; that is not to be conceived in an human manner, by plain direct ideas, as obſerved among the creatures. Such is the pride of

nfidelity, that rather than give up its all-compre-
enſion, it will blend heaven and earth together;
eſtroy the firſt principles of whatever deſerves the
ame of truth or knowledge; and ſhamefully con-
ound things eſſentially different, which God and
ature have removed at an infinite diſtance.

B. p. 29. This point cannot be allowed, by the
achers of eternal reaſons and fitneſſes; but is main-
ined as an undeniable truth, by almoſt every other
reat writer on the ſubject. The noble author al-
eady mention'd, ſhews at large, that nothing can
ind the obſervation of a command, but the ſu-
reme authority. *Puffendorff*, L. 2. c. 3. § 20----
hat we cannot conceive any fitneſs or unfitneſs in
tions prior to ſuch law. L. 1. c. 2. § 6----That
o eſtabliſh an eternal rule of morality; without
ſpect to the divine injunction, ſeems to be joining
ith God, ſome coeval extrinſical principle, which
e was obliged to follow in aſſigning the forms and
fences of things----All obligation proceeding from
e command of a ſuperior, moral good and evil
nſiſt in the reſpect they bear to that; ſo that
tting aſide all law, the motions and actions of
en, are, in reality, perfectly indifferent----And
l reaſon is informed with the knowledge of ſuch
w, it is as impoſſible for it to diſcover any mora-
y in human actions, as for a man born blind to
ake a judgment of the diſtinction of colours----
herefore ſuch ſentences, that the precepts of the
tural law are of eternal truth; and the like, muſt
ſo limited and reſtrained, that the eternity reach

no further, than the impoſition or inſtitution of God Almighty, and the origin of human kind. Ib.

To the ſame purpoſe, amongſt many foreign authors, *Oſiander* aſks; if there were any ſuch thing as moral good or evil, before all law; how could there be any obligation to make ſuch difference in our actions; ſince all obligation proceeds from the command of a ſuperior? Not. in Grot. de I. B. & P. p. 60.

And our own biſhop *Taylor* demonſtrates at large (in Duct. *Dub.*) That nature cannot make a law; nothing being juſt or unjuſt, till ſome divine law intervenes: nor are the duties of natural law bound upon us any other way, than by the command of God----The laws of nature are not to be looked for, by the rules of reaſon, which has always been uncertain as the dreams of diſturbed fancies---- It has infinitely differed in every place and age---- And the wiſeſt of men have believed the worſt of crimes to be innocent, or without any natural diſhoneſty. With numberleſs other arguments. L. 2. c. 1. Even *Hobbes* maintains that the laws of nature, have no further the force of laws, than as they are promulged in holy ſcripture by the word of God, and not as they are certain concluſions apprehended by reaſon, concerning the doing or the omitting of things. De cive. L. 3. § ult.

C. This ſome cannot digeſt, as bearing too hard againſt the gentile world; but is not the leſs true on that account. I ſhall mention, and that with great brevity, a few, out of many noble atteſtati-

on

ons to it, both from ancients and moderns, which deſerve to be read at large.

Plato refers all divine knowledge to divine inſtruction, and rightly ſays, that the Gods gave us underſtanding in order to learn, and what we learn is by their information----Nor can any man teach religion, except God go before, and ſhew him the way. Epinom. 988, 989. *Plutarch*, that by thinking rightly of the Gods, we avoid a ſuperſtition, bad as atheiſm----Better to have no Gods than what many repreſent them. Iſ. & Oſir. p. 355. D. And whoever would attain a knowledge of the Gods, muſt beg of them to grant it. Ib. Init.

Cicero, That the ancients were his teachers in religion----which they did not learn of themſelves, but were taught by others. De Haruſp. Reſponſ. That even they, who confeſſed the being of the Gods, run into ſuch a variety and difference of opinions, that it is a trouble even to enumerate them. N. D. L. 1, n. 1. That they might rather be called the dreams of madmen, than the judgments of philoſophers. Ib. n. 16. And where opinions are ſo various and oppoſite, it is poſſible that all may be falſe; impoſſible that more than one ſhould be true. Ib. n. 2. That the nature of the Gods always appeared to him very obſcure. Ib. n. 7. So that he ever doubted, never could determine what was true. *Seneca*. That to conceive unworthily of God, is to deny him. Epiſt. 114.

The elder Chriſtians ſay, that opinions unbecoming the divine nature and eſſence, are little better than blaſphemy. Clem. Alex. Strom. 6. p. 721. B.

And *Lactantius*, reflecting on the monſtrous tenets of the *Greeks*, thought it better to have no religion, than ſo impious an one; not to believe any Gods, rather than imagine them ſuch, as they were generally reported to be.

Moderns ſay the ſame. That a man may have ſuch unworthy notions of a deity, that it would in ſome reſpect, be as good, nay much better, to be without a God, than ſuch an one as he may frame. *Wilkins*, N. R. L. 1. c. 8. Better to have no opinion of God, than ſuch an one as is unworthy of him. Ld. *Bacon*'s Eſſays.

There is indeed a kind of palliation offer'd, by ld. *Herbert*, bp. *Burnet*, and others, who acknowledge the monſtrous errors, aſcribed to God by the Heathens. But, ſay they, let him be ſet forth with proper attributes, and they would be ſo far from not believing ſuch a deity, that the inſtant he was propounded, they would receive him. True; and does not this eſtabliſh, what is here contended for; that man by nature could not come at due apprehenſions of the divine attributes, but he had reaſon given him, to underſtand, and believe ſupernatural truths, when propounded to him, which could not be done but by revelation.

D. They who would ſatisfy themſelves of the philoſophick opinions, concerning the firſt principles of things, out of which they were faſhioned, need only conſult *Cicero de N. D. Plutarch. de placit. & Laertius.* And they will find but one univerſally agreed in, *viz.* that they looked upon God as a workman, who when he builds, does

not

not make the materials, but uſes thoſe already made. The great *Cicero* taught that matter had a pre-exiſtent ſtate. *in Timæo.* And, that to ſay, it was either produced from, or could be reduced to, nothing; was an abſurdity never affirmed by any philoſopher who ſtudied nature. *De Divinat.* L. 2---- And the grave *Plutarch*, that nothing can be made out of nothing, or what has no exiſtence. *De Anim. Procreat.* p. 1014----The *Pythagoreans*, *Stoics*, *Platoniſts*, and *Peripateticks*, held the pre-exiſtence of matter; and after chriſtianity, the two latter returned to profeſs their old ſyſtem, and the world's eternity, the better to oppoſe the goſpel. Nor was there ever a philoſopher, who acknowledged a God, and did not at the ſame time believe, there was an eternal uncreated being, *viz.* matter, which owed its exiſtence only to its own nature, and had no dependance on any other, for its eſſence, attributes, or properties.

E. The iſſue of this may be left to the conduct of *Socrates*, and the judgment of *Cicero*. Natural religion conſtantly appeals to, and lays great ſtreſs on, the caſe of *Socrates*. The appearance indeed was ſolemn; we ſee the beſt of men unſhaken on the brink of eternity, and diſcourſing on that momentous point, with utmoſt compoſure. But what was the conſequence? his choſen diſciples, who revered the preacher, looked on his theſis as a mere paradox, a doctrine rejected by all mankind. Nor was their maſter convinced of its truth; his doubts were great, his certainty ſo little, that he was afraid of leading both himſelf, and them, into error.

And

And concluded his famous apology with these remarkable words; it is now time that I go hence to die, and you to live; but which is best, no mortal, I think, can tell----It is also generally asserted that *Socrates* knew the true God. Of this we cannot judge better, than from his behaviour, on this last and most important event. Yet the true God is not so much as mention'd, nor any of his incommunicable attributes, under which a dying sinner would seek for refuge, his power, wisdom, or goodness; not a word of contrition or repentance, no supplicating for pardon, no hopes or even a wish for mercy, at his hands who judgeth the earth. Yet he had great compunction of mind, and scruple of conscience; not about his future condition, but for not obeying the God of dreams: therefore during his long imprisonment, makes a serious preparation for death, by composing verses to the dæmon of *Delphos*, and translating *Æsop*'s fables. And in the last gasp, calls back, as it were, his departing soul, to order the discharge of a vow by as stupid an act of idolatry, as the most ignorant savage was ever guilty of.

Cicero, affirms, that a pure mind, thinking, intelligent, and free from body, was altogether inconceivable. N. D. L. n. 10. Which, of all the philosophick opinions, is true; let some God see to it: which most likely, is a question hard to be determined. *Tusc.* Q. L. 1. n. 11. It was what most argued vehemently against; and every learned man despised it. Ib. n. 22, 31. He had often read and heard of it. *De consolat.* p. 563. and had

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he *magna ſpes*, great hopes, but no aſſurance. *Tuſc.* Q. L. 1. n. 41. When he carried philoſophy o its utmoſt ſtretch, in an exſtatick rapture on the ſoul's permanence after death, *Oh glorious day*, &c. Yet it ends in this; if after all, I am miſtaken in ny belief of the ſoul's immortality, I am pleaſed with my error. *De Senect. ult.* The dream may be nchanting, but vaniſhes as ſoon as one wakes. I ave, ſays he, peruſed *Plato*, with the greateſt di-igence and exactneſs, over and over again: but now not how it is, whilſt I read him, I am con-inced; when I lay the book aſide, and begin to onſider by myſelf, of the ſoul's immortality, all he conviction inſtantly ceaſes. *Tuſc.* Q. L. 1. n. 11.

Dr. *Clarke* ſays, "this cannot be obſerved with-out ſome pity and concern of mind." *Boyle* Lect. Diſc. 2. A great deal one may believe; for, in eality, it deſtroys, all that he, or others, have oken of natural religion.

Cicero, indeed, thought common conſent to be he ſtrongeſt argument in favour of the ſoul's im-nortality. *Tuſc.* Q. L. 1. n. 14. Yet immediately fter affirms, "that *Pherecydes* was the firſt man, as evidently appears from his writings, who ſaid the ſouls of men were immortal." Ib. n. 16. Which ſurely can imply no more, than that, in his pinion, it was a doctrine ſo agreeable to the rea-n and wiſhes of mankind, as muſt be aſſented , whenever duly propoſed. But will not prove that be the voice of nature, which ſo many millions of tional creatures in the weſtern world never ought, or heard of, for above fifteen hundred

years

years together. Some of our greateſt moderns alſo tell us, that it muſt be a natural notion, becauſe *men hit upon it by chance, and agreed in it:* ſo that their rational faculties had no part in the noble diſcovery; which is a contradiction to all their other ſchemes, and as great an inſult upon reaſon, as on true religion.

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